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## PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF EARLY REHABILITATION OF PERSONS AFFECTED BY MILITARY ACTIONS

У статті здійснено теоретичний аналіз психологічних аспектів ранньої реабілітації осіб постраждалих внаслідок військових дій. Розкрито сутність поняття «рання психологічна допомога» та її роль у системі медико-психологічної підтримки. Окреслено етапи психологічного відновлення після травматичної події, визначено ключові принципи (безпе́чність, автономія, емпатійність, ресурсність, мультидисциплінарність) та моделі втручання (BASIC Ph, кризова інтервенція, *trauma-informed care*, біопсихосоціальна модель). Зроблено акцент на сучасних українських підходах до організації психологічної допомоги в умовах ранньої реабілітації, зокрема у межах програм mhGAP та діяльності мультидисциплінарних команд МОЗ. Проаналізовано труднощі впровадження таких практик в Україні: дефіцит фахівців, відсутність стандартизованих протоколів, високий рівень емоційного навантаження на персонал. Підкреслено необхідність розвитку супервізійної підтримки, етичних стандартів роботи в гострих відділеннях і розроблення єдиних методичних рекомендацій. Рання психологічна реабілітація розглядається як невід'ємний компонент комплексного відновлення особистості після бойової травми, спрямований на стабілізацію емоційного стану, попередження посттравматичних розладів і формування здатності до подальшої соціальної інтеграції.

**Ключові слова:** рання реабілітація, психологічна допомога, бойова травма, психоемоційна стабілізація, мультидисциплінарна команда, супервізія, психічне здоров'я.

*The article presents a theoretical analysis of the psychological aspects of early rehabilitation of individuals affected by military actions. The essence of the concept of “early psychological assistance” and its role within the system of medical and psychological support are revealed. The stages of psychological recovery after a traumatic event are outlined, and the key principles – safety, autonomy, empathy, resource orientation, and multidisciplinary – are defined. The main intervention models, including BASIC Ph, crisis intervention, trauma-informed care, and the biopsychosocial approach, are described. Special attention is given to modern Ukrainian approaches to organizing psychological assistance in the context of early rehabilitation, particularly within the mhGAP program and the activities of multidisciplinary teams of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine. The article analyzes the main challenges in implementing such practices in Ukraine: a shortage of qualified specialists, the lack of standardized protocols, and the high emotional workload of personnel. The necessity of developing supervisory support, ethical standards for work in acute departments, and unified methodological guidelines is emphasized. Early psychological rehabilitation is considered an integral component of comprehensive recovery after combat trauma, aimed at emotional stabilization, prevention of post-traumatic disorders, and fostering the ability for further social reintegration.*

**Keywords:** early rehabilitation, psychological assistance, combat trauma, psycho-emotional stabilization, multidisciplinary team, supervision, mental health

**Formulation of the problem.** The full-scale war in Ukraine has led to a significant increase in the number of individuals who have sustained injuries as a result of combat operations. For these persons, recovery involves not only the restoration of physical functions but also the timely provision of psychological support aimed at emotional stabilization, reduction of anxiety levels, and the development

of adaptive coping mechanisms. Early psychological rehabilitation is viewed as a key component of a comprehensive medical and psychological approach that ensures holistic human recovery.

The challenge lies in the fact that during the acute phase of trauma, affected individuals experience physical pain, emotional exhaustion, and uncertainty about the future. This situation creates a demand for specially trained professionals capable of providing psychological assistance within hospital settings – at the patient’s bedside, in a short-term format, and in accordance with the principles of safety and respect for personal autonomy.

#### **Analysis of recent research and publications**

Recent Ukrainian and international publications reflect the growing attention to the issue of early psychological rehabilitation of individuals affected by war-related injuries. In the Ukrainian scientific field, fundamental studies by Osiodlo and Horbunova (2020), Hilman and Kulesha (2025), Tytarenko (2020), and Matiash and Panfilova (2024) emphasize the importance of integrating psychological and medical rehabilitation within a single systemic approach. These works outline the need to support emotional stabilization, restore motivation for life, and prevent secondary traumatization among war-affected individuals.

The publications of Horbunova (2019) and Korotia (2022) focus on the role of psychological resources and social factors in overcoming trauma, while Kochubei (2023) explores the peculiarities of providing psychological support to military personnel during medical rehabilitation. Research findings presented in the Bibliographic Index “Medical-Psychological Rehabilitation and Social Adaptation of Combatants” (Matiash & Panfilova, 2024) summarize national experience in the development of multidisciplinary teams and integrated rehabilitation protocols.

At the international level, the World Health Organization (2023) through its mhGAP Humanitarian Intervention Guide promotes trauma-informed care principles, emphasizing the early initiation of psychological support at the stage of medical stabilization. Current reports of Médecins Sans Frontières (2025) and studies in European Psychiatry (2024) confirm the effectiveness of simultaneous physical and psychological rehabilitation.

Thus, the analysis of recent research demonstrates that modern rehabilitation psychology increasingly relies on a biopsychosocial paradigm and a multidisciplinary model of intervention, which ensures the integrity of psychological recovery processes in individuals who have sustained combat-related injuries.

**The purpose of the article** is to conduct a theoretical analysis of the psychological aspects of early rehabilitation among persons injured as a result of military actions, as well as to summarize contemporary approaches to organizing psychological assistance during the acute recovery stage.

The objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To reveal the essence of the concept of “early rehabilitation” in the context of psychological assistance.
2. To analyze the main psychological needs of individuals with combat-related injuries during the acute phase.
3. To characterize the principles and models of psychological intervention that are effective in the early stages of rehabilitation.
4. To outline the role of the psychologist within a multidisciplinary team and the factors influencing the effectiveness of early rehabilitation.

**Outline of the main material.** The issue of early psychological rehabilitation of persons injured as a result of military actions belongs to the key domains of modern rehabilitation psychology, which lies at the intersection of crisis counseling, clinical psychology, psychotraumatology, and medical-social rehabilitation [7]. The growing number of individuals who have sustained injuries and psychological trauma during the war has highlighted the need for a systemic approach to personal recovery that integrates both biological and psychosocial mechanisms of healing.

As emphasized in the textbook «Theory and Practice of Psychological Assistance and Rehabilitation» [7], the psychologist’s main task is to ensure the holistic functioning of the individual after a traumatic event through emotional stabilization, the maintenance of motivation for life, the development of adaptive coping strategies, and the prevention of secondary traumatization. According to Tytarenko [8], early psychological rehabilitation is not limited to overcoming the consequences of trauma but involves a gradual restoration of life activity, the formation of a renewed identity, and the development of the capacity for post-traumatic growth.

Contemporary approaches to psychological assistance for individuals with combat-related injuries emphasize the step-by-step nature of the recovery process, which enables a gradual transition from crisis

stabilization to post-traumatic growth. The initial stage, crisis stabilization, focuses on emotional calming, re-orientation to the present moment, and the restoration of a basic sense of safety. The subsequent adaptation phase involves acceptance of bodily, social, or professional limitations resulting from the traumatic experience. During the *integration phase*, traumatic experiences are reinterpreted, new cognitive schemas and meaning structures are formed, and internal coherence is strengthened. The final stage, post-traumatic growth, is characterized by an expanded worldview, a reassessment of personal values, and the establishment of renewed life priorities – indicators of restored psychological integrity and enhanced personal resilience [5; 8].

This structure is consistent with international models of crisis intervention, particularly BASIC Ph [10], and with contemporary Trauma-Informed Care protocols [10, 11]. Both approaches emphasize timeliness and humanistic orientation – psychological assistance should begin already at the stage of medical stabilization, when the individual is in a state of shock, fear, and disorientation.

In the context of war-related trauma, early intervention is understood not as a reaction to consequences but as proactive psychological support during the acute phase of trauma, aimed at restoring basic feelings of safety, control, and connection with reality [1, 7]. In hospital settings, where the patient experiences physical pain and dependency on medical personnel, the psychologist acts as a moderator of emotional stabilization and a mediator between bodily and psychological experience, helping the person integrate the traumatic event into a renewed self-structure.

Hilman and Kulesha [1] note that psychological rehabilitation in wartime conditions must take into account the patient's age, social, and cultural characteristics. For adults, the dominant need lies in rethinking one's identity and social role after trauma, while for younger groups, emotional regulation and the support of the family system are more crucial. These ideas align with the psychology of life creation concept [8], which considers the individual an active subject capable of reconstructing their life world even after destructive experiences.

The theoretical foundations of early psychological rehabilitation are based on a number of principles that determine both the effectiveness and ethicality of assistance provision [5, 7, 11]. One of the core principles is complexity, which implies the integration of medical, psychological, social, and spiritual professionals' efforts within a unified rehabilitation process. The principle of graduality ensures a consistent transition from crisis intervention to long-term psychological support, promoting stabilization and the development of adaptive mechanisms. Individualization of rehabilitation measures involves selecting methods and techniques that consider the type of trauma, level of awareness, and previous life experience of the person.

An important methodological guideline is resource orientation, which presupposes reliance on both internal resources (faith, willpower, life experience) and external ones – family, peers, and community support. The final principle, humanism and subjectivity, involves respect for the autonomy and uniqueness of every individual as well as the prevention of secondary traumatization during the provision of psychological assistance.

According to the Bibliographic Index “Medical-Psychological Rehabilitation and Social Adaptation of Combatants” [5], the modern Ukrainian rehabilitation system is evolving toward a multidisciplinary approach, where the psychologist is an integral member of the rehabilitation team. The key task of the early stage is to prevent the development of post-traumatic disorders, preserve social identity, and sustain motivation for life.

Recent studies (European Psychiatry, 2024; International Journal of Mental Health Systems, 2025; Médecins Sans Frontières Reports, 2025) demonstrate that the effectiveness of psychological recovery significantly increases when the rehabilitation process begins concurrently with physical treatment rather than after it. Such an integrative perspective corresponds to the biopsychosocial model of health [4], according to which physical, psychological, and social aspects of human functioning are interdependent.

Within this framework, psychological assistance is not the final stage of treatment but an accompanying process that begins once vital functions have stabilized. This approach reduces the risk of chronic anxiety and depressive disorders, supports a positive self-concept, and preserves the integrity of personal experience.

Researchers emphasize that rehabilitation should be directed not only toward compensating for losses but also toward the activation of personal potential and the development of an individual's capacity for self-realization and life creation. This approach aligns with the concept of post-traumatic growth proposed by Tedeschi and Calhoun [2], which acquires new significance in the context of the wartime experiences of Ukrainian service members.

A theoretical analysis of the issue would be incomplete without addressing the ethical and deontological dimensions of professional practice. The Code of Ethics for Psychologists highlights the importance of the principles of confidentiality, voluntariness, and non-maleficence. In the context of early intervention, particular importance is attached to respect for a person's autonomy, even when they are in a state of physical helplessness [9]. Psychological support should be provided according to the principle of supportive presence – being alongside the patient without imposing emotional openness until the individual is ready to share their experiences [1].

Thus, theoretical analysis demonstrates that early psychological rehabilitation represents a systemic process integrating clinical, psychological, social, and spiritual dimensions of recovery.

Its theoretical foundations rest upon the biopsychosocial model of health [4], which views the human being as a holistic system of interconnected biological, psychological, and social factors; the crisis concepts of Rapoport [1] and Lahad [10], which describe the patterns of response to traumatic events and pathways toward restoring psychological equilibrium; and the humanistic psychology of life creation [8], which underscores the active role of the individual in reconstructing their life path. In addition, the framework incorporates modern Trauma-Informed Care standards [10, 11], which focus on establishing a safe, supportive environment that prevents re-traumatization and promotes the restoration of personal autonomy.

Therefore, early psychological rehabilitation of patients with combat injuries is grounded in interdisciplinarity, humanism, graduality, and subjectivity, while its effectiveness depends on the readiness of professionals to operate in acute conditions with empathy, flexibility, and professional composure.

In the contemporary framework of rehabilitation psychology, early intervention is regarded as a complex of purposeful actions aimed at restoring basic psychological functions, stabilizing the emotional state, and preventing the development of maladaptive reactions in patients with traumatic experiences [7, 11]. Early psychological assistance is not limited to short-term crisis intervention – it represents an ongoing, accompanying process that begins in the acute phase of trauma and continues throughout the early stage of rehabilitation. The foundation of this process lies in adherence to key principles that ensure the ethical integrity, effectiveness, and sustainability of recovery efforts.

#### 1. The Principle of Safety

The principle of safety constitutes the foundation of the entire system of early rehabilitation. It involves creating conditions of physical, emotional, and psychological stability in which the patient can regain a sense of control and trust toward the staff. According to WHO recommendations [11], a sense of safety is fostered through a predictable daily routine, clarity of medical procedures, minimization of sensory stimuli (such as loud noises or abrupt movements), and calm, confident communication.

Tytarenko [8] emphasizes that modeling a controlled environment near the patient's bedside helps reduce anxiety, restore a sense of reality, and stabilize bodily and emotional sensations. In practical terms, this includes clearly explaining medical procedures to decrease uncertainty; providing information gradually to prevent cognitive overload; supporting orientation in time and space; and maintaining an empathic, unhurried presence that fosters trust and facilitates emotional stabilization. Safety, in this sense, serves as a framework within which further psychological processing of the traumatic experience becomes possible.

#### 2. The Principle of Autonomy and Subjectivity

Physical trauma and hospitalization often deprive individuals of their usual sense of control, provoking feelings of helplessness and dependence. Therefore, the psychologist's key task is to restore the individual's sense of subjectivity – the ability to influence one's own condition and make decisions [5]. Modern approaches interpret autonomy as an internal resource of self-regulation that can be activated through the support of choice, even in small matters: deciding when to rest, whom to communicate with, or which topics to discuss [1].

Psychological assistance in this context involves gradually restoring control through the development of self-observation, breathing techniques, short-term goal setting, and the reinforcement of achievements during treatment. The restoration of subjectivity is a prerequisite for post-traumatic growth, marking the transition from the role of a «victim» to that of an «active participant in recovery» [8].

#### 3. The Principle of Empathy and Validation of Experience

Empathy in early psychological intervention is not merely emotional support but a professional capacity to accept the person's experiences without judgment, which fosters trust and reduces internal tension. The validation of experience refers to the acknowledgment that all emotional responses – fear, anger, tears, or anxiety – are normal reactions to abnormal circumstances.

During early intervention, it is crucial to help patients become aware of their feelings, name them, and find safe ways of expression. This emotional articulation facilitates the integration of traumatic memories into the personality structure. Psychologists working in hospital environments often serve as *emotional containers*, maintaining stability through verbalization, body-oriented techniques, or elements of narrative therapy [5].

Empirical studies demonstrate that the practice of emotional validation, combined with short-term cognitive-behavioral interventions, significantly reduces acute stress manifestations during the first two weeks after trauma [1].

#### 4. The Principle of Resource Orientation

One of the most important components of early intervention is identifying and activating the patient's resources – both internal (faith, will, personal meaning, humor) and external (family, peers, medical staff, spiritual community). According to Hilman and Kulesha, the resource-based approach shifts the focus from deficits to potential, reinforcing dignity and hope.

In practice, psychological support based on resource activation involves helping patients recall previous achievements, identify sources of strength, and reconnect with supportive relationships. This may take the form of exercises aimed at recognizing personal strengths, creating “resource maps,” or discussing positive experiences that coexist with pain and loss [8]. Modern research confirms that early activation of resources decreases the intensity of acute stress symptoms and reduces the likelihood of developing post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

#### 5. The Principle of Multidisciplinarity

Early psychological rehabilitation proves effective only when implemented through team-based collaboration among specialists – psychologists, physicians, physical therapists, occupational therapists, social workers, and chaplains. Multidisciplinarity allows for a holistic view of the patient – not merely as a clinical case, but as a person with an individual history, system of values, and social roles [5].

Research conducted by the Ukrainian Scientific and Practical Center for Psychological Assistance to Veterans underscores that coordinated teamwork among specialists shortens the rehabilitation period and decreases the risk of re-hospitalization. According to WHO international standards, such collaboration must be grounded in mutual respect, shared goal-setting, and information exchange conducted with full respect for confidentiality.

Both international and Ukrainian rehabilitation practices employ several conceptual models that are highly relevant in the context of early rehabilitation for patients with combat-related injuries.

1. The BASIC Ph Model describes six fundamental channels of stress coping – Belief (faith, values), Affect (emotions), Social (social support), Imagination (symbolization, imagery), Cognition (thinking, meaning-making), and Physical (bodily activity, recovery). In early rehabilitation, this model allows the psychologist to quickly assess which channels are currently active and which require strengthening – for instance, enhancing cognitive orientation, broadening emotional expression, or stimulating social engagement.

2. The Trauma-Informed Approach assumes work with the patient while taking into account the pervasive impact of trauma on their emotions, cognition, and behavior. Its core principles include safety, trust, choice, collaboration, and empowerment. This approach is widely applied in clinical departments where psychological support is integrated into the broader process of medical care.

3. Rapoport's Crisis Intervention Model is a short-term framework of psychological support focused on stabilization and mobilization of personal resources. In military settings, it has been adapted as the «Stabilize – Normalize – Mobilize» model, which enables effective responses to states of acute disorganization following trauma.

4. The Biopsychosocial Model of Rehabilitation provides an interdisciplinary framework that views recovery as the outcome of interaction among physiological, psychological, and social factors. It facilitates the integration of psychologists into medical teams and underscores the importance of psychological support for physical healing.

Applying these models during the early phase of rehabilitation optimizes patients' adaptation, minimizes the risk of chronic psychological trauma, and enhances the overall effectiveness of treatment. As noted by Ukrainian researchers [5], the highest efficiency is observed when psychological support begins immediately after stabilization of vital functions, in cooperation with physicians and physical therapists.

Early psychological rehabilitation of individuals injured as a result of military actions is a complex and multidimensional process that integrates clinical, psychosocial, and ethical components. Despite

growing attention to this issue in Ukraine, its practical implementation remains fragmented and uneven due to various objective and organizational constraints.

One of the major challenges involves limited resources – human, temporal, and institutional. In many medical institutions, psychologists lack the opportunity to work directly at the patient's bedside or to be fully integrated into the multidisciplinary team. According to Matyash, this leads to a disconnection between the physical and psychological dimensions of rehabilitation, reducing the overall effectiveness of the comprehensive approach. Furthermore, the absence of unified national protocols for early psychological assistance complicates the standardization and scaling of practices within the healthcare system.

Another critical factor is the emotional burden on professionals working with patients in acute conditions. Constant exposure to severe injuries, pain, loss, and death results in a high risk of professional burnout and secondary traumatization among psychologists [7]. In this regard, supervisory support systems play an essential role and should be an integral component of psychological work in medical institutions. Regular supervision sessions help reduce emotional exhaustion, sustain professional competence, and maintain adherence to ethical standards in patient interaction.

Equally important is the ethical dimension of early intervention. Psychologists in clinical settings frequently face dilemmas concerning confidentiality, boundaries of personal contact, and informed consent – especially when patients are in a state of physical or psychological shock. In line with the Code of Ethics for Psychologists [10], specialists are obliged to ensure informed consent, operate within their competence, and avoid actions that may cause re-traumatization. This is particularly critical when working with military patients, where trust and a sense of safety are essential for therapeutic effectiveness.

Another aspect requiring attention is the training of psychologists for work in early rehabilitation settings. Traditional academic education often does not address the specifics of clinical interaction in hospital environments. As evidenced by the training programs of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine and mhGAP, effective practice demands the development of applied competencies – including short-term counseling, crisis intervention, and interdisciplinary communication. Psychologists must be able to adapt therapeutic methods to the limited temporal and spatial conditions of hospital settings, employing flexible yet evidence-based approaches. In the Ukrainian context, early psychological rehabilitation is gradually becoming an integral part of the national system of medical and psychological care. The number of specialists engaged in hospitals, mobile teams, and rehabilitation centers is steadily increasing. However, further progress requires systemic support – including regulatory frameworks, educational programs, intersectoral collaboration, and ongoing scientific evaluation.

Thus, early intervention in the rehabilitation of injured patients is not only a therapeutic but also a socio-humanitarian task that requires a holistic understanding of the human being as a biopsychosocial entity. Its effectiveness depends not only on the professional competence of psychologists but also on the institutional maturity of the system within which they operate.

### **Conclusions**

The psychological aspects of early rehabilitation for patients injured as a result of military actions represent a key domain of contemporary clinical and rehabilitation psychology. Based on the conducted theoretical analysis, several generalizations can be made:

Early psychological assistance constitutes an integral component of a comprehensive medical and psychological approach to the treatment and recovery of individuals with combat-related injuries. It contributes to the stabilization of emotional states, prevention of post-traumatic disorders, and the development of adaptive coping mechanisms.

The core principles of early intervention – safety, autonomy, empathy, resource orientation, and multidisciplinary – ensure the effectiveness of psychological support even during the acute phase of trauma.

Analysis of modern models – BASIC Ph, the Trauma-Informed Approach, Rapoport's Crisis Intervention Model, and the Biopsychosocial Model – demonstrates that the greatest effectiveness is achieved through the integrated application of approaches that combine emotional, cognitive, and social dimensions of adaptation.

Among the main challenges to implementing early psychological rehabilitation in Ukraine are the shortage of qualified specialists, the lack of unified national protocols, the high emotional burden on professionals, and insufficient supervisory support.

The further development of the early psychological assistance system requires intersectoral collaboration, state-level support, the creation of clinical practice standards, and the enhancement of training programs that prepare professionals to work effectively in medical and crisis environments.

In conclusion, early psychological rehabilitation should be regarded not merely as a therapeutic tool but as a humanistic practice aimed at restoring personal integrity, subjectivity, and the individual's capacity for meaningful life after trauma.

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**THE INFLUENCE OF CONTACT WITH ANIMALS (ANIMAL-ASSISTED THERAPY)  
IN A NATURAL ENVIRONMENT ON THE SOCIO-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF  
CHILDREN WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS (ASD)**

*Стаття присвячена дослідженню одного з інноваційних підходів у виправній роботі — поєднання терапії за допомогою тварин та терапії природним середовищем (екотерапії) для сприяння соціально-емоційному розвитку дітей з розладами аутистичного спектру (РАС). Актуальність дослідження визначається зростаючою потребою в ефективних, недирективних методах підтримки дітей з РАС, які часто мають значні труднощі в сферах соціальної взаємодії, комунікації та емоційної регуляції. Метою статті є теоретичний аналіз та емпіричне обґрунтування синергетичного впливу взаємодії з тваринами в природних умовах на соціально-емоційну сферу дітей з цією нозологією. У статті аналізуються ключові механізми впливу терапії за допомогою тварин, такі як зниження рівня тривожності, стимулювання невербальної комунікації, розвиток емпатії та мотивація до соціальних контактів. Окремо розглядається роль природного середовища як чинника, що зменшує сенсорне перевантаження, сприяє релаксації та надає багаті можливості для неструктурованої гри та дослідження. Результати проведеного дослідження демонструють, що такий комплексний підхід позитивно впливає на кілька ключових аспектів:*

- Зменшення соціальної тривожності та проявів стереотипної поведінки.*
- Поліпшення навичок спільної уваги та зорового контакту.*
- Розвиток здатності розпізнавати та виражати власні емоції.*
- Підвищення ініціативи у встановленні соціальних контактів (з твариною, а також з терапевтом або однолітками).*

*Висновки. Доведено, що інтеграція терапії за допомогою тварин у природне середовище створює унікальні, збагачені і водночас заспокійливі умови, які діють як каталізатор розвитку соціально-емоційних навичок у дітей з РАС. Цей підхід має значний терапевтичний потенціал і може бути рекомендований як ефективне доповнення до традиційних програм втручання.*

**Ключові слова:** *розлади аутистичного спектру (РАС), терапія за допомогою тварин, інтервенції за допомогою тварин, екотерапія, природне середовище, соціально-емоційний розвиток, соціальна взаємодія, емоційна регуляція*

*The article is devoted to the study of one of the innovative approaches in correctional work—a combination of animal-assisted therapy and natural environment therapy (ecotherapy) to promote the socio-emotional development of children with autism spectrum disorders (ASD). The relevance of the study is determined by the growing need for effective, non-directive methods of supporting children with ASD, who often have significant difficulties in the areas of social interaction, communication, and emotional regulation. The aim of the article is the theoretical analysis and empirical substantiation of the synergistic effect of interaction with animals in natural conditions on the socio-emotional sphere of children with this nosology. The article analyzes the key mechanisms of animal-assisted therapy's influence, such as reducing anxiety levels, stimulating non-verbal communication, developing empathy, and motivating social contact. Separately, the role of the natural environment is considered as a factor that reduces sensory overload, promotes relaxation, and provides rich opportunities for unstructured play and exploration. The results of*

*the conducted research demonstrate that such a comprehensive approach positively affects several key aspects:*

- *Reduction of social anxiety and manifestations of stereotypical behavior.*
- *Improvement of joint attention and eye contact skills.*
- *Development of the ability to recognize and express one's own emotions.*
- *Increased initiative in establishing social contacts (with the animal, as well as with the therapist or peers).*

**Conclusions.** *It is substantiated that the integration of animal-assisted therapy into the natural environment creates unique, enriched, and at the same time calming conditions, which act as a catalyst for the development of socio-emotional skills in children with ASD. This approach has significant therapeutic potential and can be recommended as an effective supplement to traditional intervention programs.*

**Keywords:** *autism spectrum disorders (ASD), animal-assisted therapy, animal-assisted interventions, ecotherapy, natural environment, socio-emotional development, social interaction, emotional regulation*

**Main material.** Autism spectrum disorders (ASD) are characterized by persistent deficits in social communication, interaction, and restricted, repetitive patterns of behavior. One of the most complex tasks in supporting such children is the development of their socio-emotional competence [1]. Traditional methods, although demonstrating effectiveness, often face challenges in generalizing skills and high levels of child anxiety in structured office settings. This encourages the search for innovative, "soft" approaches. Animal-assisted therapy (or animal-assisted interventions) has established itself as a powerful tool for reducing anxiety, motivating interaction, and developing empathy [2]. The animal acts as an unconditional, non-judgmental partner and as a "social catalyst," facilitating the child's contact with the world. At the same time, research in the field of ecotherapy indicates that the natural environment has a pronounced therapeutic effect: it reduces sensory overload, helps restore attention, and creates a rich, yet non-aggressive stimulating space [3]. We hypothesized that the combination of animal-assisted therapy and being in a natural environment creates a unique synergistic effect, significantly enhancing the correctional impact on the socio-emotional development of children with ASD compared to the isolated use of these methods. The purpose of our study is to empirically investigate and analyze the dynamics of socio-emotional development in children with ASD as a result of implementing a comprehensive program that combines animal-assisted therapy and natural environment therapy. Study base and participants. The empirical study was conducted at the Vinnytsia Regional Children's Clinical Hospital (VRCCH). The study involved 30 children aged 5 to 8 years with a confirmed diagnosis of ASD (F84.0, F84.5 according to ICD-10), who were receiving outpatient support at VRCCH. Participants were divided into two groups:

1. Experimental group (EG) (n=15) — children who participated in the developed comprehensive program.

2. Control group (CG) (n=15) — children who received the standard set of correctional services provided at the facility (sessions with a speech therapist, psychologist). The groups were matched for age, sex, and the severity of autistic manifestations (based on initial diagnostics). Informed consent from parents was a mandatory condition for participation.

Autism spectrum disorders (ASD) are characterized by persistent deficits in social communication and interaction, as well as by restricted and repetitive patterns of behavior and interests. One of the most complex and multidimensional tasks in the psychological support of children with ASD is the development of their socio-emotional competence — a foundation that determines their ability to interact, empathize, and regulate their own states [1]. Traditional approaches, although empirically supported, often encounter significant limitations. These include the difficulty of transferring acquired skills into natural contexts, a high level of situational anxiety caused by structured office settings, and the child's reduced motivation in standardized correctional formats. Such difficulties encourage specialists to seek innovative, integrative, and "soft" methods of intervention that provide a more natural and emotionally comfortable context for development.

Animal-assisted therapy (AAT), also known as animal-assisted intervention, has proven itself to be a powerful and empirically supported tool for reducing anxiety, enhancing motivation for interaction, and fostering empathy [2]. The animal functions simultaneously as an unconditional, non-judgmental partner and as a "social catalyst," facilitating spontaneous communication and emotional resonance between the child and the surrounding world. In parallel, research in the field of ecotherapy and environmental psychology shows that the natural environment exerts a pronounced therapeutic influence: it mitigates

sensory overload, contributes to attentional restoration, supports self-regulation, and provides a rich but non-aggressive multisensory space [3].

We hypothesized that the combination of animal-assisted therapy with a natural setting produces a synergistic effect, amplifying the corrective influence on socio-emotional development in children with ASD compared to the isolated use of each approach. The purpose of our study was to empirically investigate and analyze the dynamics of socio-emotional development in children with ASD resulting from the implementation of a comprehensive, ecologically oriented intervention program integrating both animal-assisted and natural environment therapies.

**Therapy Methodology.** We developed a program that included 20 sessions (2 times a week for 45 minutes). Sessions were held in a specially equipped green area adjacent to the hospital building and in the premises of the rehabilitation center's petting zoo. During the sessions, the hospital's park area, rich in natural stimuli (trees, grass, tactile paths), and a specially prepared enclosure were used. This allowed for minimizing sensory stimuli typical of hospital premises and promoted relaxation for the young patients. Specially trained and certified animals participated in the program: a canine therapy dog (Labrador breed) and small animals (rabbits, guinea pigs), which passed veterinary control. Each session had a clear but flexible structure:

- 1) Greeting ritual (with the therapist and the animal);
- 2) Sensory contact (caring for the animal – feeding, brushing);
- 3) Joint activity (elements of training, games with a ball, navigating an obstacle course in the natural environment);
- 4) Free interaction;
- 5) Farewell ritual.

Sessions were conducted by a team consisting of a psychologist, an animal-assisted therapist (cynologist), and a physical therapist. Assessment of socio-emotional development was carried out twice (before the start and after the completion of the program) using a set of methods:

1. Observation method (CARG): A structured observation chart for the child's social behavior in a group, adapted by us for the study's purposes. The frequency of eye contact, the number of social initiations (towards an adult, towards an animal), manifestations of joint attention, and emotional reactions were recorded.

2. Parent questionnaire: An adapted version of the socialization scale from the Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales (VABS) to assess parents' perceptions of changes in the child's daily behaviour [4].

3. Expert assessment: Assessment of the child's psycho-emotional state by a psychologist using an emotional discomfort scale (reduction of anxiety, aggression, stereotypes).

Analysis of the data collected at VRCCH revealed a noticeable positive dynamic in the children of the experimental group compared to the control group.

1. Improvement in social interaction and communication. Based on the results of structured observation, a qualitative improvement in interaction skills was recorded in the children after completing the program.

The animal acted as a powerful motivator: if at the initial stage contact was initiated mainly by the therapist, by the end of the course, 73% of children (11 out of 15) demonstrated spontaneous initiatives (calling the dog, offering food to the rabbit). The number of joint attention episodes (child-animal-therapist) increased by an average of 2.5 times. Children more often used eye contact to confirm their actions with the therapist ("Look how I'm throwing the ball to the dog").

In the control group, such changes were insignificant.

2. Emotional regulation and reduction of anxiety.

The natural environment combined with the calm, friendly state of the animal created a "comfort zone."

Parents of children with ASD in 80% of cases (12 out of 15) noted in the questionnaires a reduction in the general level of anxiety and the frequency of sensory overloads.

According to expert assessments by psychologists, these patients showed a significant decrease in the frequency of stereotypical and self-stimulatory behaviors during sessions (compared to their behavior in a regular office). The animal often acted as a "container" for emotions – children hugged the dog when they felt anxious, which allowed them to stabilize more quickly.

3. Discussion of results. The obtained results confirm our hypothesis about the synergistic effect. Unlike standard sessions, where the child is often in a state of "demand" (you must complete the task), therapy in the natural environment with an animal was built on free motivation. For a child with ASD, direct social contact with a person is complex and exhausting. The animal (particularly the dog) became an

ideal intermediary. Its behavior is understandable, predictable, and devoid of "double meanings." This allowed the children to "practice" models of interaction (requesting, initiating, caring) in safe conditions and subsequently transfer them to the therapist. The park environment of VRCCH neutralized negative factors (bright artificial light, enclosed space) that are often triggers for sensory overload in children with ASD. Natural sounds, smells, and the possibility of free movement contributed to lowering cortisol levels and general relaxation. Thus, in the proposed program, the child did not "learn" socialization directly, but "lived" it in a motivated, emotionally positive, and sensorily comfortable activity.

Data analysis revealed a statistically significant positive dynamic in the experimental group compared to the control group.

1. Improvement in social interaction and communication.

According to structured observation, children in the experimental group demonstrated a marked increase in social initiatives and non-verbal communication after the program. While at the initial stage, contact was predominantly therapist-initiated, by the end, 73% of children (11 out of 15) initiated spontaneous interaction (calling the dog, offering food to the rabbit). The number of joint attention episodes increased by an average of 2.5 times. Children began to use eye contact more intentionally ("Look, I'm throwing the ball to the dog!").

In contrast, the control group displayed minimal changes, limited to increased tolerance of social proximity.

2. Emotional regulation and anxiety reduction.

The combination of natural stimuli and the calm, responsive presence of the animals created a "comfort zone" for emotional expression. In 80% of parental reports (12 out of 15), a reduction in anxiety and sensory overload episodes was noted. Psychologist evaluations confirmed a significant decrease in stereotypical behaviors and self-stimulatory patterns. Many children used physical contact with the therapy dog (hugging, stroking) as a spontaneous self-soothing mechanism, leading to faster emotional stabilization.

The findings confirm the hypothesis of a synergistic interaction between the two modalities — animal-assisted and nature-based therapy. Unlike traditional correctional sessions, which rely on structured performance demands, this program fostered intrinsic motivation and autonomous participation.

For children with ASD, direct social engagement often provokes tension due to the complexity of interpreting human emotional cues. The animal, however, represents a predictable and emotionally transparent partner — free of ambiguity, judgment, or social pressure. This allows the child to safely practice interactional behaviors such as requesting, initiating, responding, and caring, which are then transferred to human relationships.

The natural environment amplified this process by neutralizing artificial triggers (bright lights, enclosed spaces, sterile smells) that often provoke sensory overload. Natural sounds, textures, and the opportunity for free movement contributed to a state of relaxation and improved attention regulation.

Thus, within the proposed model, the child does not merely "learn" social behaviors through imitation but experiences socialization as an emotionally positive, embodied process. This approach aligns with the principles of experiential learning and ecological psychology, where development unfolds through active, meaningful interaction with both living beings and the natural world.

**Further analysis and conclusions**

The obtained results reveal several important psychological mechanisms underlying the positive effects of combined animal-assisted and nature-based interventions for children with ASD. Firstly, the mechanism of emotional mediation plays a central role. In traditional therapy settings, the therapist acts as the main source of social and emotional input, which may be perceived by the child as excessive or unpredictable. In contrast, the animal provides a mediated, safe channel of affective exchange: it responds to the child's emotional state without verbal complexity, thereby facilitating nonverbal synchronization and empathy development. This resonates with the concept of affective attunement described by D. Stern, where shared emotional experience becomes the foundation for social understanding.

Secondly, the ecological context of the sessions created optimal conditions for sensorimotor integration. Many children with ASD experience difficulties in processing complex sensory stimuli, which leads to defensive withdrawal or hyperactivity. Exposure to a natural environment with balanced sensory input (soft textures, natural sounds, rhythmic movement) promotes self-regulation and reduces hyperarousal. This is consistent with S. Kaplan's Attention Restoration Theory, according to which natural settings restore directed attention and reduce cognitive fatigue. Thus, sensory comfort becomes a prerequisite for emotional openness and learning readiness.

Thirdly, the observed behavioral dynamics suggest a gradual shift from external regulation (following therapist instructions) to internalized regulation — a hallmark of socio-emotional growth. The presence of animals facilitated spontaneous imitation, emotional mirroring, and empathy, which are often impaired in ASD. Such spontaneous behaviors were not explicitly taught but emerged organically, indicating the activation of intrinsic motivational systems. This supports the idea that emotionally rewarding experiences in therapy can activate neuroplastic mechanisms related to social cognition.

It is also important to emphasize the therapeutic alliance that developed within the triad child–animal–therapist. The therapist's role shifted from an instructor to a co-participant and emotional moderator, which reduced the child's defensive behavior. This aligns with humanistic and experiential models of psychotherapy (C. Rogers, V. Satir), where authenticity, empathy, and unconditional acceptance become core conditions for change. The animal's unconditional responsiveness modeled these qualities and reinforced the therapist's relational stance.

From a practical perspective, the results suggest that the integration of animal-assisted and nature-based elements into correctional programs can significantly enhance motivation, emotional engagement, and transfer of acquired skills into everyday contexts. Such interventions are especially effective for children who demonstrate resistance to conventional forms of therapy or experience heightened anxiety in artificial environments. Moreover, the ecological approach is relatively low-cost and sustainable, as it utilizes existing natural and institutional resources.

Nevertheless, certain limitations should be acknowledged. The study sample was relatively small and homogeneous, which limits generalization. Further research with larger and more diverse samples is needed to confirm the reliability of findings and explore long-term outcomes. It would also be valuable to investigate the neurophysiological correlates of such interventions, for example, through heart rate variability or cortisol monitoring, to provide objective evidence of reduced stress and improved self-regulation.

In conclusion, the combination of animal-assisted therapy and natural environment exposure represents a promising, humanistic direction in the psychological support of children with ASD. It allows for the creation of emotionally secure, multisensory developmental contexts where social competence, empathy, and self-regulation can naturally emerge. The presented model can be adapted and implemented in various rehabilitation and educational settings, expanding the spectrum of modern psychotherapeutic approaches toward more holistic and child-centered practices.

**Conclusions.** The empirical study conducted at the Vinnytsia Regional Children's Clinical Hospital (VRCCH) confirmed the high correctional effectiveness of the integrated program combining animal-assisted therapy and natural environment therapy for improving the socio-emotional development of children with autism spectrum disorders (ASD). It has been proven that the application of this program contributes to significant positive dynamics in the children of the experimental group compared to the control group, which received standard correctional services. Key improvements were recorded in the following areas:

- Social interaction: An increase in the number of spontaneous social initiatives (verbal and non-verbal) directed at both the animal and the therapist.
- Communicative skills: Improvement in the quality and duration of eye contact and a significant increase in joint attention episodes.
- Emotional regulation: A noticeable reduction in the general level of anxiety, and the frequency of stereotypical and self-stimulatory behaviors during sessions. We also confirmed the hypothesis about the synergistic effect of combining the two factors.

The effectiveness of the program is due to the fact that:

- The animal acts as a powerful motivator, "social mediator" (intermediary), and "emotional container," making the interaction process safe, predictable, and emotionally attractive for the child with ASD.
- The natural environment acts as a "sensory regulator," reducing the risk of sensory overload characteristic of office settings and promoting general relaxation and attention restoration.

The program developed by us and tested at VRCCH creates unique, enriched, and at the same time calming conditions in which the child does not "learn" socialization directly, but "lives" it in a motivated, positively colored, and sensorily comfortable activity.

It should be noted that this approach is a valid and scientifically substantiated methodology that can be recommended for implementation in the practice of rehabilitation centers, medical institutions, and inclusive resource centers as an effective supplementary tool in the comprehensive support system for children with ASD.

Prospects for further research are seen in conducting a longitudinal analysis to assess the sustainability of the results obtained, expanding the sample, and comparatively analyzing the effectiveness of using different types of animals (e.g., canine therapy and hippotherapy) in natural conditions.

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## ENVIRONMENTALISM AND MODERN CHRISTIAN ECO-THEOLOGY

*У статті розкрито теоретичні аспекти генези екології в контексті сучасних інвайронменталістських соціальних рухів та особливості конфесійних розгалужень екології. Зазначено, що екологічна криза та усвідомлення меж підкорення природи актуалізували проблему духовних засад західної цивілізації. Розглянуті підходи ментального подолання екологічної кризи, які пропонуються мислителями та очільниками різних християнських конфесій. Вказано на докорінну відмінність протестантської екології від її католицько-православних «аналогів». Виявлено, що сама православна екологічна парадигма не є єдиною: в ній чітко вирізняється позиція Вселенського патріархата та РПЦ. У висновках, стверджується, що головні ідеї сучасної екології полягають у переосмисленні доктрин монотеїстичних релігій у напрямку переконання щодо відношень Бога, світу та людини.*

**Ключові слова:** екологія, інвайронменталізм, екологічні проблеми, протестантизм, католицизм, православ'я, **теологічна екологія**, окультизм, біоетика, есхатологія.

*The article reveals the theoretical aspects of the genesis of eco-theology in the context of modern environmentalist social movements and the peculiarities of confessional branches of eco=theology. It is noted that the ecological crisis and awareness of the limits of the subjugation of nature have actualized the problem of the spiritual foundations of Western civilization. The approaches to mental overcoming of the ecological crisis, which are proposed by thinkers and leaders of various Christian denominations, are considered. The fundamental difference between Protestant eco-theology and its Catholic-Orthodox "analogues" is indicated. It is revealed that the Orthodox ecological paradigm itself is not the only one: the position of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Russian Orthodox Church is clearly distinguished in it. In the conclusions, it is stated that the main ideas of modern eco-theology consist in rethinking the doctrines of monotheistic religions in the direction of reformatting the relationship between God, the world and man.*

**Keywords:** eco-theology, environmentalism, environmental problems, Protestantism, Catholicism, Orthodoxy, theological ecology, occultism, bioethics, eschatology.

**Problem statement.** The problem of survival of mankind in the middle of the second decade of the 21st century has acquired the highest significance. The unprecedented growth of scientific knowledge and its technological implementation has not brought humanity either relief from wars or natural disasters. On the contrary, the final conquest of nature and industrial progress have become the causes of the deepening of the ecological crisis, which can lead to the death of all mankind. General warming is only the first symptom of a possible future catastrophe. However, this threat was predicted back in the 70s of the last century. The most insightful thinkers sagacious thinkers even then warned about the coming ecological disaster and called for changes in priorities in thinking and behavior. It was then that a broad environmentalist movement began in the USA and Western European countries, based not only on efforts to preserve nature, but also on calls for fundamental changes, primarily overcoming anthropocentrism and the idea of endless scientific and technological progress. The founding fathers of the environmentalist movement, for example, the Norwegian philosopher Arne Næss, believed that the cause of environmental problems was the biblical spiritual tradition in relation to living and inanimate nature. Even earlier, a similar position was expressed by the American historian Lynn White, who directly blamed Christianity for the modern ecological crisis, which, in his opinion, largely arose as a result of the dominance of the Christian worldview in the West, which views nature only as an object of domination and subjugation by man.

It is these ideological challenges that have led to the emergence of eco-theology, that is, a theological response to these accusations from representatives of various religions and their denominations

(primarily Christian). It is to eco-theology, its sources and specifics, its influence on modern public consciousness, and its interaction with environmentalist movements that our article is devoted.

**Analysis of recent research and publications.** The analysis of recent research and publications on the basis of which our article is based shows that in recent decades a number of studies have been conducted in Ukraine devoted to the problem of defining the subject and genesis of ecotheology. Thus, the process of the emergence and evolution of eco-theology is considered by such domestic researchers as V. Boreyko, I. Vityuk, T. Gardashuk, A. Gerasymchuk, O. Dobryden, A. Yermolenko, G. Ilyina, I. Fenno, and others. The analysis of changes in the determinants of Western ecotheology has found its place in the works of leading Western researchers of ecotheology and figures of the environmentalist movement such as G. Altner, T. Derr, F. Elder, D. Ferkiss, K. Jorgenson, J. Cobb, A. Næss, A. Padgett, J. Rogers, P. Tyler, J. Zizioulas, L. White and others. At the same time, we turned to the program documents of the Catholic and Orthodox churches, the encyclicals of the Roman Popes John Paul II, Benedict XVI, Francis I, the epistles and sermons of the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I.

**The purpose of this article** is to identify the essence of ecotheology, its sources and confessional specificity, its influence on modern public consciousness and interaction with environmentalist movements.

**Presentation of the main research material.** The first attempt at a thorough criticism of Christianity for its anti-ecological nature belongs to the American historian Lynn White, who in 1967 published the article "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis" [1]. According to L. White, to see the source of environmental problems only in technical and economic growth means to show a superficial, limited approach to the problem, since the causes of environmental difficulties are actually spiritual and originate in the Judeo-Christian religious tradition. Christianity, especially in its Western version, is the most distant religion from nature. L. White identifies two dangerous moments in Christianity. The first is that Christianity is a monotheistic religion in which God is transcendent in relation to nature. The second is the biblical teaching about man as the crown of nature. In these moments, biblical religion radically differs from European paganism [1]. L. White identified the advantages of the pagan worldview for the formation of an appropriate respectful attitude towards nature, because in the era of antiquity, every tree, every stream, every mountain had its own protective spirit, which was accessible to man and in many ways similar to him. Any attempt to cut down a tree or block a stream encountered invisible resistance from these spirits. Before committing an act of destruction of a natural object, a person had to think about its consequences. Christianity, according to L. White, deprived man of this restraining principle. Therefore, Christianity bears a huge burden of historical guilt. According to the historian, it is guilty of the ecological crisis not only directly, but also indirectly, as a religion that made scientific and technological progress possible. It was science, thanks to technological achievements, that created tools that allowed man to exploit nature on a large scale and ruthlessly. L. White believed that European science has deep roots in the Judeo-Christian religious tradition [1]. According to many modern researchers, L. White's thesis remains to this day the dominant factor in the influence of religious beliefs on environmental attitudes and behavior.

One of the first attempts to oppose L. White was made by the Protestant (Presbyterian) theologian Jack Rogers, who was probably the first to use the term "ecotheology". He sharply criticized L. White's concept and suggested that he turn at least to the works of Augustine Aurelius to recognize the falsity of his views. J. Rogers also provided a certain outline of the direction he initiated: "Ecotheology is a form of constructive theology that focuses on the interrelationships of religion and nature, especially in the light of environmental problems" [2, p. 180].

However, together with L. White, the famous Norwegian environmentalist and ecophilosopher A. Nays also criticized the Judeo-Christian position on living nature: "The self-confidence of man, which is revealed in the Bible," the scientist wrote, "lies in the idea of superiority, which is expressed in the fact that we exist as a chosen intermediary between the creator and the creation" [3, p.123]. This belief led to the fact that man, without any grounds, began to consider himself a higher being, and all other living beings, only a means of satisfying his, often far from rational, needs. Considering the right to life as his natural, inalienable right, he denied the existence of such a right in all other animals and plants, exterminating entire species of living beings. The polemic between ecotheology and environmentalism unfolded at the end of the 20th century in Western Europe and the USA. L. White and A. Nays with their numerous followers believed that humanity needed a new religion that would change such attitudes and contribute to the preservation of the environment. However, eco-theologians (mostly Protestant) have provided a solid arsenal of arguments that refute such conclusions. For example, most of them pointed out that there are enough places in the Bible that testify to the intrinsic value of all creation, not just man. Man is faced with a constant choice between good and evil, and the test instrument for the correctness of the choice is a person's attitude not only to his neighbor, but also to other living beings and nature as a whole. According

to some eco-theologists, it is philosophy, not Western religion, that is to blame for the emergence of views that harm the environment, and the way out of the modern ecological crisis is not so much the establishment of legal or economic means of regulation, but rather the raising of religious consciousness and voluntary self-restraint.

That is, eco-theology was born in the Protestant environment (mostly in the USA). Protestant ecological concepts, unlike other currents of Christianity, are characterized by significant diversity and close connection with the main Western interpretations of the ecological crisis. Not limiting themselves to explaining the causes of the ecological crisis only by human sinfulness, Protestant theologians try to prove that the "ecological balance" was disturbed as a result of a change in religious attitudes towards nature.

The prominent Protestant theologian T. Derr calls for a rethinking of some biblical provisions. He believes that it is necessary to return "to the biblical texts, read anew, from the point of view of ecological concepts", and reduces the ecological problem primarily to religious and ethical issues, emphasizing that "the center of the discussion in solving ecological problems is Christian theology and ethics" [4: 3] presents them as "demons" that are harmful to humanity; but they are only a projection of the evil inherent in man, an expression of his "sinfulness", "a product of free will". Many theorists of Protestantism believe that it is enough to change some Christian principles to overcome the contradictions in the "society-nature" system. J. McQuarrie assigns the leading role in establishing harmony between society and nature to "profound changes" in the value system of society, mainly to changes "in the sphere of Christian religion". D. Ferkiss argues that it is "Christianity that will be able to play a major role" in solving environmental problems. In conditions of raw material shortages, it is Christianity with its influence on millions of people "in the future society of restriction and coercion, it will probably be easier for it to play a normative social role than it was possible in modern Western culture with its Promethean and materialistic aspirations" [5: 26]. Christianity will become the main "ideological and institutional force that legitimizes the new social order" [5, p.26].

These ideas are widely supported by representatives of the Protestant "process theology". Criticizing the "anthropocentric" concept, they try to prove the existence of a transcendent connection between nature, humanity and God, and the formation of a "new vision of nature" requires: combining science, theology and ethics; forming a "new ecological view of nature, man and God"; to develop a new "ethics of life" that will educate in man "responsibility for all living things before God" [6, p.70–71].

The theory of the "new asceticism" occupies a special place among the ecological concepts proposed by Protestant thinkers. Theorists of the "new asceticism" F. Elder and J. B. Cobb believe that the main cause of the ecological crisis was man's desire for unlimited economic growth. F. Elder believes that it is the "new asceticism", the elements of which are "restriction", "respect for all living things", that can lead to the replacement of "exploitation of nature with its harmony", and for this "we must be more moderate in the consumption of natural resources, limit population growth and develop a sense of reverence". He believes that for this it is necessary to make changes in religious beliefs and create an "environmentalist theology". Such views are also supported by John B. Cobb. He argues that "theologians must participate in the development of a new way of life", the basis of which will again be moral and religious changes" [6, p. 41–42].

Eco-theology has acquired its most systematic presentation in the works of the German Protestant theologian Günther Altner. Back in 1977, he published the work "Ecological Theology", the main thesis of which is that the crisis of survival has become "the central challenge for theology". He understands the ecological formulation of the question as a theological one, which all theological disciplines should set for themselves. Ecological theology for G. Altner is "necessarily practical, universal and interdisciplinary", since it is a reflection on the conditions of survival of humanity under the condition of a possible premature end of earthly life [7]. The task of Christians is to learn a new art of death. The reality of the transcendent dimension surrounding man is recognized in the conditions of technical civilization only when the claims of this civilization to eternity are destroyed and the onset of crisis and death is realized. From the apocalyptic threat, a new perspective for life arises, which begins to be realized as having a limit. G. Altner develops his theology in an unusual for a theologian detailed and competent dialogue with various branches of natural science. At the same time, he characterizes the modern situation of the dialogue by the fact that systemic-theological, evolutionary-theological, ecological, ethical, legal attempts to comprehend and reason about the theology of creation are aware of the fact that they are generated by the crisis of relations between man and nature, and this can become both the beginning of the death of all things and the continuation of development at the level of a new integration. G. Altner presents a theological justification for an ethics of respect, which aims to consider all living beings as ethical subjects. The ecological challenge appears to him as a challenge to all theological disciplines, which must give new interpretations to creation and human

responsibility towards creation in close dialogue with the ecological sciences, with environmental movements and all those who care daily for the protection of life [7].

Thus, the active dispute about the responsibility of Christianity for the ecological crisis has, although not centuries-old, but still a long history. The main points in this dispute were accusations. in a utilitarian, instrumental approach to nature, conditioned by the idea of human domination over nature; criticism of anthropocentrism, claims about the higher status of man, compared to all other living beings; and, finally, criticism of the idea of the qualitative separation of the Creator and creation, which justifies both anthropocentrism and a utilitarian attitude towards nature. In addition to the already mentioned L. White, who especially intensified the discussion, these issues were discussed by many philosophers, theologians, mainly Protestant, who reflected on the issue of protecting nature.

In 2020, the book "Ecotheology: A Christian Conversation" was published, which is a kind of summary of the development of Protestant eco-theology, a reflection of the current state of the aforementioned discussion. Forming as an interdisciplinary field within the ecological humanities, today Protestant eco-theology unites the natural and social sciences, collaborates with various forms of ecocriticism in the work of rethinking the Holy Scriptures, "revising and teaching new ways of worship, prayer, and preaching; rethinking the boundaries of Christian doctrine; reforming the mission of the church" [8]. Unlike Protestant, Catholic and Orthodox ecotheology are institutionalized in nature and are presented, primarily, in the writings, sermons, epistles, and activities of the highest hierarchs of these Christian churches. The Catholic Church was one of the first to respond to visible signs of an ecological threat. Already in 1971, Pope Paul VI in his apostolic letter "Octogesima adveniens" warned humanity against the unreasonable use of natural resources, which leads to the destruction of nature and, accordingly, to the destruction of the prerequisites for human life. Ecological issues of human responsibility for their natural environment were raised in the encyclicals of Popes John Paul II and Benedict XVI. But until 2015, there was no encyclical fully devoted to the theological understanding of environmental issues in Catholicism. Only on May 24 of this year did the encyclical of Pope Francis I "Laudato si, mi' Signore" – "Glory be to you, Lord" appear [9, p.847–944].

In it, Francis considered the ecological crisis as a consequence of the ethical, cultural and spiritual crisis of humanity and put forward the idea of creating an "integral ecology", that is, a comprehensive approach that combines environmental problems with social and economic. The Pope emphasizes the close connection between the poor and the vulnerability of the planet. The document calls on people to "ecological behavior" – to change their thinking, lifestyle and behavior in order to move towards sustainable development and more responsible consumption. The encyclical emphasizes that the Earth is our common home, which must be cared for, and that ignoring environmental problems is a serious injustice to future generations [9, p.940]. "Laudato si'" has become one of the most famous and influential documents of Pope Francis. It has caused a wide resonance and active discussion not only in the Catholic Church, but also in the world community. The encyclical has contributed to the growth of environmental awareness and served as a source of inspiration for numerous initiatives, programs and projects aimed at protecting the environment. It should be noted that in this work, as in other encyclicals of previous pontiffs, the term "ecology" is never used.

However, it is widely used by Catholic thinkers, analyzing problems of the relationship between Christian dogma and modern environmental consciousness. For example, in September 2021, a conference of the Catholic Theological Association of Great Britain was held in the Irish city of Maynooth together with the Irish Theological Association under the symbolic name "Eco-Theology: A New Heavens and a New Earth". It featured reports by Catholic eco-theologists: Ashley Beck, Peter Sherle, Celia Dean Drummond, and Catriona Russell. Of particular note was the report by Peter Tyler and Salvador Ryan, in which they considered eco-theology in the broad context of general spirituality and the development of material culture. In particular, they call for "engaging in eco-theology at the foot of the Cross". Peter Tyler and Salvador Ryan analyzed the views of eco-theologists of various directions and their influence on the formation of a Christian response to the modern environmental crisis [10].

Analyzing the specifics of Orthodox eco-theology, it is impossible not to recall the sermons, works and activities of the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I (Dimitrios Archondonis), who deservedly received the title of "green patriarch". Following his predecessor Patriarch Demetrios, he established many fruitful connections with politicians, officials, scientists, based on environmental interests and responsibility for peace. The activities of the "Green Patriarch" can be divided into three interrelated parts.

First, these are the so-called "green appeals" of the Patriarch. Every year on the day of prayer for creation (September 1), established by the previous Ecumenical Patriarch Demetrios in 1989, Bartholomew addresses all Christians, all religions in general, scientific communities and cultures with a message about

the need and importance of environmentally responsible behavior in what God created. In recent decades, the Ecumenical Patriarch has been working to unite theology and ontology, emphasizing the inseparability of the natural and supernatural realms. This attitude reflects the Orthodox Church's teaching about nature as a substance filled with God's grace, even as it "walls" with the rest of creation. The second is a green symposium on water. In 1994, Patriarch Bartholomew founded the Religious and Scientific Committee, which is dedicated to the preparation and holding of international, interdisciplinary, and interreligious symposia on environmental protection. One of the main areas of the committee's work is the study of the state and fate of rivers and seas, which cover two-thirds of the planet's surface. To achieve maximum effect in solving environmental problems, the patriarch invites representatives of other Christian denominations, representatives of the major world religions, scientists, ecologists, journalists and politicians to symposia. Also, symposia, uniting different faiths and denominations, reveal the wisdom of various theological traditions and the common imperative to protect the natural world. Thus, during a symposium dedicated to the Adriatic Sea in 2002, Pope John Paul II and Patriarch Bartholomew signed a joint declaration emphasizing the spiritual duty to care for God's creation for future generations.

Thirdly, Patriarch Bartholomew is known worldwide as an environmental speaker. He draws the attention of politicians and dignitaries to the fact that there is a relationship between the international economy and global ecology. He makes people think about the meaning of the Greek words *oiko-nomia*, *oiko-logia* and *oikou-mene*, which are cognate with the word *oikos*. The basic meaning of the word *oikos* is also a house. Our world is our home, the home of every person and creation. Everyone should remember that *oikonomia* (economy) means the care and management of our household; *oiko-logia* (ecology) is the study, study, knowledge of our economy. The relationship between economy and ecology is not accidental. No person can live pretending that the world does not exist. The Patriarch emphasizes that we are not isolated human beings, but social beings who must live in community and share peace with everyone. Human attitude to the created natural world directly affects and reflects the attitude of all people. Therefore, the Orthodox Church recognizes that natural creation is inseparable from the essence and destiny of humanity [11, p.157]. Moreover, because our attitude towards other people and towards the environment on this earth is a clear symbol of how we believe in the Living God. It seems that it is not so easy to combine modern environmental problems with theological premises. Although Patriarch Bartholomew realizes that for most scientists and politicians the attempt at such a connection is a paradoxical and even eccentric enterprise, he tries to convince them that ecology should be connected with theological cosmology and anthropology. If humanity wants to survive, it should remain on the foundation of ecology alone. The main question: why does man destroy the environment? Patriarch Bartholomew believes that man destroys nature in order to use it in his own interests, to provide himself with more benefits and comfort in everyday life [11, p.204]. Such behavior is by definition irrational. Changing such an attitude towards the environment requires the help of a theological view of the world as God's creation. The value of Orthodox ecological theology (eco-theology), in our opinion, lies in the fact that it necessarily has the status of ontologicality, of involving a person in being. Orthodox, as well as Christian consciousness in general, indicates to a person "the path to being", "the path to gaining experience of direct experience of being" [10]. The experience of being, which is described by some Christian saints (Basil the Great, Gregory of Nyssa) allows one to go beyond the boundaries of the "small self", to abandon attachment to the goods of this world, from worries about oneself, about one's tomorrow. Involvement in the world of being "opens up the possibility for a person, being in the ordinary world – the world of interactions, to adjust his behavior in accordance with the "existential" scale of values, imposing strict restrictions on the nature and scale of his actions [11, p.208]. In addition, this status of ontologicality will allow one to reveal the substantive elements of the ecological imperative as an internal ecological law. Fulfilling the ecological imperative within the framework of Orthodox theology is not blind observance of a "commandment" motivated by fear, but a natural manifestation of love in response to all creation, a human response to the boundless love of the Creator.

Bartholomew I calls for an optimistic worldview, for the position that it is not too late to start caring about the environment now for the happiness of our descendants: "The natural environment – forests, water, land – belongs not only to the present generation, but also to future generations. We must frankly recognize that humanity has the right to something better than what we see around us. We, and, even more so, our children and future generations have the right to a better and brighter world, a world free from degradation, cruelty and bloodshed, a world of generosity and love. Selfless and selfless love for our children will show us the path we should follow in the future" [12, p.142]. Regardless of our beliefs, views, convictions, we all want to breathe clean air, we all want to live, and therefore it is not too late for us to unite for the sake of the future: "We are all in this together," states Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I. "Indeed, the natural

environment unites us when transcendent doctrines distinguish. We may differ in our concepts of the origin of the planet - biblical or scientific. However, we all agree on the need to protect its natural resources, which are neither infinite nor available [12, p.144]. Thus, in the works and statements of Patriarch Bartholomew I, one can find a holistic and consistently presented system of environmental philosophy. Its key thesis is the idea that the environment is the creation of the Lord, the result of God's action, and the world is a sacred place full of beauty. Awareness of the harmony of creation implies an understanding of the balance and measure of consumption and use of resources. Ecological degradation arises from our spiritual imperfection. Changing our attitude towards the environment based on the non-utilitarian principle of reverence for Creation is a condition for the spiritual transformation of man, which is necessary for the good of future generations.

All Orthodox theologians, reflecting on the ecological theme, focus their attention on one or another area, reveal it in more detail, or even defend the ideas themselves only in a different form. Thus, the modern Orthodox theologian, Metropolitan John (Zizioulas) of Pergamum, claims that the ecological crisis has a spiritual dimension. The area of this dimension is directly related to the church and theology, therefore they cannot remain silent when the world is under threat of destruction. He identifies several dimensions of Orthodox theology related to the ecological issue:

1. The world was created out of nothing. It is in constant danger of returning to nothingness. The world is not eternal, even it is fragile like a crystal vase, and it should be treated with reverence, fear and awe;
2. Such a caring attitude towards the world was entrusted by God to man as a being different from the rest of creation, including the angels. According to the teaching of the Holy Fathers, man consists of the material and the spiritual, in order to be a microcosm of creation. Angels, as spiritual creatures, cannot be mediators between the world and God. Man, as a priest of creation, has the unique mission of uniting creation and the Creator, the material world and God. The human task is not simply to save creation, but also to sanctify and bring it to the level of divine existence. The essence of the priesthood of man is to return creation to its Creator;
3. The salvation of humanity through Christ and in Christ is a cosmic event. Through man, all creation will be saved. Christ not only saves man from himself, but also frees all creation. The incarnation of Christ was nothing other than the assumption of human nature, not simply to save man, but also to save the rest of creation through participation;
4. The Eucharist defines Orthodox theology not so much as an intellectual, psychic experience, but as an experience. The Eucharist is not simply a "memory" of Christ's death and resurrection, but a cosmic event that involves all creation. The bread and wine are not simply symbolic elements that bind the Church to the final events of the Last Supper, but they are the world of creation. Therefore, the Orthodox Christian, by partaking of the Eucharist, testifies that the material world must be saved, liberated, and united with God;
5. The ascetic experience of the Orthodox Church is often mistakenly perceived as an example of a negative attitude towards creation. Asceticism is perceived as a belittling, a rejection of the material world. This is a neoplatonic understanding of matter, of the material, which is far from true church asceticism. Asceticism abstains from or withdraws from the material world not because it is considered bad, but because of a deep respect for matter, so as not to use it to satisfy one's own individual needs. Another aspect of asceticism is that the ascetic participates in the suffering of all creation, mourning the death of even a bird or an animal. Such sensitivity towards nature is not negative in nature, but rather reflects a positive attitude towards nature, as a result of love and respect for the material world [13].

The central idea of Metropolitan John (Zizioulas), which unites these dimensions, is that man is by his calling a priest of creation, which places on him and on the church the obligation to preserve the environment. The Metropolitan concludes that neither ethics, nor legislation, nor science can independently solve the problem of ecology. "Modern society needs a new approach, a new mentality, a new ethos, and all this can be found with the help of the church. For centuries, in the Orthodox Church, believers were educated through fasting, a respectful attitude towards the material world, and a liturgical understanding that creation belongs to God. In this sense, people were less egocentric than we are now. Only when a person learns to be a priest of creation can we hope to develop the right approach to solving the ecological problem that humanity faces today," concludes Metropolitan John (Zizioulas) [13].

It should be noted that the modern Russian Orthodox Church, after a period of some interest in environmental issues (after the Chernobyl disaster), in the person of hierarchs and obedient theologians, condemned eco-theology as a heretical doctrine and even closed the Department of Ecology at the Russian

Orthodox University [14]. And now, when the ROC openly sanctifies the aggressive war against Ukraine, it also reproaches the Ecumenical Patriarch for refusing to support its henchmen in Ukraine: “If only Patriarch Bartholomew had at least half the concern for the Orthodox people (meaning the accomplices of the occupiers from the UOC MP – V. P.) that he has for ecology!” [15]

However, the Ecumenical Orthodox Church remains faithful to the concept of “theological ecology” of Patriarch Bartholomew (this is what the theologians of Constantinople propose to call Orthodox ecotheology). This is evidenced by the International Ecotheological Symposium, which took place in early October 2025 at the Patriarchal Higher Ecclesiastical Academy of Crete on the theme “Ecotheology: Dynamics of Shared Responsibility”.

The symposium highlighted two key points. First, the timeless role of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in establishing September 1 as the Day of Prayer for the Protection of the Environment at the ecumenical and global levels; and second, the urgent need for an ecological culture to prevail, which will oppose the consumerism and unbridled growth that dominates modern society.

“The role of humanity is not to dominate creation, but to coordinate, protect, initiate and priestly, since nature is not an instrument or resource for human satisfaction, but a companion on the eschatological journey towards the salvation of all creation,” declared Augustinos Bayraktaris, professor of Orthodox theology and ecumenical movement at the Patriarchal Ecclesiastical Academy of Crete, at this forum. “Furthermore, it has been repeatedly noted that ecological injustice, combined with human greed, is the root of the current ecological crisis. Thus, in order to create a just, participatory and sustainable society for all, it is essential to cultivate responsibility as the fruit of the exercise of freedom, both individually and collectively,” Bayraktaris said. “Thus, human freedom endangers contemporary global Christianity, especially in the context of its liturgical ministry. Therefore, preserving the integrity of the environment and human dignity is not a matter for a few or experts, but a matter of life for all, because the Earth is our common and unique home” [16].

It is impossible not to agree with this statement: indeed, preserving the ecological system of our planet is a common cause of Protestants and Catholics, Orthodox and representatives of non-Christian religions, occultists and atheists. And eco-theology, whatever names it takes in various confessional doctrines, is one of the most significant challenges of the beginning of the 21st century.

Conclusions and Prospects for Further Research. A synthetic philosophical and theological trend called “eco-theology” emerged and gained popularity in religious, scientific, and political discourses in the 1970s. It reflects the branch and direction of Protestant (and partly Catholic) theological research related to the apologetics of dominant beliefs in response to the radical criticism of environmentalists of religious doctrines, primarily Christian, in their anthropocentric orientation, which became the cause of a destructive attitude towards nature and the modern ecological crisis. The main ideas of modern ecotheology are to rethink the doctrines of monotheistic religions in the direction of reformatting the relationship between God, the world, and man. Most Protestant eco-theologists put forward:

- the idea of divine immanence in the entire Cosmos;
- a relational, ecological, rather than hierarchical understanding of God, people, and the created world;
- a radical reformatting of the view of human dominion over nature in terms of partnership with nature;
- preaching justice for all creatures, not just humans, emphasizing the needs of the impoverished masses and endangered species worldwide.

These ideas are also presented in a somewhat modified form in the ecological paradigm of modern Catholicism. In recent years, its content has been significantly influenced by the encyclical of the late Pope Francis (Jorge Mario Bergoglio) “Laudato si”. In Orthodox theological discourse, ecotheology is represented by the “theological ecology” of Patriarch Bartholomew and his like-minded people. However, the Orthodox concept is not unified: the head and theologians of the Russian Orthodox Church, in contrast to the Universal Church, have a more rigid position on environmentalist movements, accusing them of occultism and paganism. Perhaps, criticism of this position will become the subject of our further research.

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**DYNAMICS AND PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS OF REFLECTION DEVELOPMENT  
IN YOUNGER SCHOOLCHILDREN**

Стаття присвячена одній з ключових проблем сучасної педагогічної психології – дослідженню генезису рефлексії у учнів початкової школи. Актуальність теми визначається стратегічним зсувом в освітній парадигмі, закріпленням у концепції Нової української школи (НУШ). Перехід від моделі, заснованої на знаннях, до моделі, заснованої на компетентностях, висуває на перший план формування ключової компетентності «навчитися вчитися», психологічним ядром якої є не просто знання, а розвинені метакогнітивні навички та рефлексивні здібності. Без здатності учня до самоаналізу, самоконтролю та самокорекції неможливо стати суб'єктом освітньої діяльності. Дослідження має на меті подолати суперечність між заявленою метою НУШ та недостатнім розвитком психологічних і педагогічних умов для формування рефлексії на практиці. Дослідження базується на синтезі провідних американських, європейських та українських психологічних концепцій. Теоретичну основу складають: Американська школа: праці Дж. Дьюї (концепція рефлексивного мислення), Дж. Флавелла (теорія метакогніції) та С. Хартера (теорія мотивації та самооцінки). Європейська школа: когнітивний конструктивізм Ж. Піаже (роль децентралізації в розвитку рефлексії) та концепція діалогічного навчання Р. Александра. Українська психологічна школа: ідеї Г.С. Костюка про єдність мислення та самосвідомості, а також генетико-психологічна теорія особистості С.Д. Максименка, яка розглядає рефлексію як ключовий механізм саморегуляції та особистісного розвитку.

Метою статті є теоретичний аналіз підходів до проблеми та емпіричне дослідження вікової динаміки розвитку рефлексії (у 2 та 4 класах), а також виявлення її провідних психологічних чинників. Для досягнення цієї мети було проведено емпіричне дослідження на вибірці 80 учнів (N=80). Було використано комплекс валідних діагностичних інструментів: адаптовану версію «Опитувальника метакогнітивної обізнаності для дітей» (Jr. MAI), «Шкалу внутрішньої та зовнішньої орієнтації» (С. Хартер), техніку «Сходи» (діагностика самооцінки) та таблицю спостереження за уроком (за принципами Р. Александра).

Емпіричний аналіз виявив чітку позитивну тенденцію у розвитку рефлексії. Було встановлено якісний перехід від зовнішньо ситуативної, орієнтованої на вчителя рефлексії у 2-му класі до формування елементів внутрішньої метакогнітивної (моніторинг процесу дії) та особистої (аналіз власних станів та причин труднощів) рефлексії у 4-му класі. За допомогою кореляційного аналізу (r-Пірсона) було визначено провідні психологічні чинники, що визначають процес розвитку рефлексії у молодших школярів.

Зроблено висновок, що розвиток рефлексії в молодшому шкільному віці є систематичним процесом, який не відбувається автоматично, а визначається тріадою чинників: мотиваційними (наявність інтересу), особистісними (адекватна самооцінка) та педагогічними (діалогічне середовище). Результати дослідження обґрунтовують необхідність впровадження в практику НУШ цільових програм, спрямованих не тільки на розвиток когнітивних навичок, а й на формування адекватної «я-концепції» та когнітивного інтересу учнів.

**Ключові слова:** рефлексія, учень початкової школи, навчальна діяльність, метакогніція, динаміка розвитку, психологічні чинники, мотивація до навчання, самооцінка, діалогічне навчання, Нова українська школа.

*The article is devoted to one of the key problems of modern pedagogical psychology – the study of the genesis of reflection in primary school students. The relevance of the topic is determined by a strategic shift in the educational paradigm, enshrined in the concept of the New Ukrainian School (NUS). The transition from a knowledge-based to a competency-based model brings to the fore the formation of the key competency of “learning to learn,” the psychological core of which is not simply knowledge, but developed metacognitive skills and reflective abilities. Without the student's ability to self-analyze, self-control, and self-correct, it is impossible to become a subject of educational activity. The study aims to overcome the contradiction between the declared goal of NUS and the insufficient development of psychological and pedagogical conditions for the formation of reflection in practice.*

*The study is based on a synthesis of leading American, European, and Ukrainian psychological concepts. The theoretical basis is provided by: The American school: the works of J. Dewey (the concept of reflective thinking), J. Flavell (the theory of metacognition), and S. Harter (the theory of motivation and self-esteem). European school: J. Piaget's cognitive constructivism (the role of decentralization in the development of reflection) and R. Alexander's concept of dialogic learning. Ukrainian psychological school: ideas of G.S. Kostiuk on the unity of thinking and self-awareness, as well as the genetic-psychological theory of personality by S.D. Maksymenko, which considers reflection as a key mechanism of self-regulation and personal development.*

*The purpose of the article is to provide a theoretical analysis of approaches to the problem and an empirical study of the age dynamics of reflection development (in grades 2 and 4), as well as to identify its leading psychological factors. To achieve this goal, an empirical study was conducted on a sample of 80 students (N=80). A set of valid diagnostic tools was used: an adapted version of the “Metacognitive Awareness Questionnaire for Children” (Jr. MAI), the “Intrinsic and Extrinsic Orientation Scale” (S. Harter), the “Ladder” technique (self-assessment diagnostics), and a lesson observation chart (based on the principles of R. Alexander).*

*Empirical analysis revealed a clear positive trend in the development of reflection. A qualitative transition was established from externally situational, teacher-oriented reflection in the 2nd grade to the formation of elements of internal metacognitive (monitoring the process of action) and personal (analysis of one's own states and causes of difficulties) reflection in the 4th grade. Using correlation analysis (r-Pearson), the leading psychological factors that determine the process of reflection development in younger schoolchildren were identified.*

*It was concluded that the development of reflection in primary school age is a systematic process that does not occur automatically but is determined by a triad of factors: motivational (presence of interest), personal (adequate self-esteem), and pedagogical (dialogical environment). The results of the study justify the need to introduce targeted programs into the NUS practice, aimed at developing not only cognitive skills, but also forming an adequate “I-concept” and cognitive interest of students.*

**Key words:** *reflection, primary school student, learning activity, metacognition, development dynamics, psychological factors, learning motivation, self-esteem, dialogical learning, New Ukrainian School.*

**Problem statement.** The current stage of development of the national education system, embodied in the New Ukrainian School (NUS) reform, declares a fundamental shift from a knowledge-oriented to a competence-based paradigm. The central place in it is occupied by the formation of a key competence – «the ability to learn», which implies the ability of a student to independently organize, regulate, and control their own cognitive activity.

The psychological core and, at the same time, the mechanism of this ability is reflection—the process of the subject's awareness of their own cognitive processes (metacognition), modes of activity, emotional states, and personal qualities. It is precisely developed reflection that allows the student to transform from a passive «object» of pedagogical influence into an active «subject» of their own learning activity, capable of self-development and self-improvement.

At the same time, there is a sharp contradiction in the actual educational practice of primary schools. On the one hand, the NUS standard requires the development of reflective skills, starting from the first grade, as an integral part of each lesson. On the other hand, traditional approaches often dominate pedagogical practice, where reflection is given formal attention (for example, through answers to the question «did you like it/didn't you like it»). Without targeted psychological and pedagogical support, reflection in younger schoolchildren often develops spontaneously, remaining at a low, situational level and not becoming an effective tool for self-regulation.

This contradiction is exacerbated by the insufficient development of the problem itself in educational psychology. Educators often lack valid tools for diagnosing and forming reflection, as the specific psychological factors (determinants) that promote or hinder its development in primary school age remain insufficiently studied. The question remains open as to how internal learning motivation, self-esteem structure, and the level of metacognitive awareness are interrelated and how they influence the overall dynamics of the formation of reflection during the transition from 2nd to 4th grade.

Thus, the problem of the study lies in the discrepancy between the acute socio-pedagogical need to develop reflective students (a requirement of the New Ukrainian School) and the lack of scientifically based data on the psychological factors and conditions that ensure this process in primary school. This creates a need for empirical study of the dynamics of reflection and its key psychological determinants.

**The purpose of this article** is to empirically investigate the dynamics of reflection development and identify its leading psychological determinants in younger schoolchildren based on a synthesis of American, European, and Ukrainian psychological theories.

**Presentation of the main material.** This study deliberately focuses on concepts developed within American, European, and Ukrainian psychological schools, as they provide a powerful basis for understanding reflection as the foundation of student subjectivity.

*1. American tradition: from pragmatism to metacognition.*

American philosopher and psychologist John Dewey is considered the founder of the study of reflection in education. He contrasted «routine action» (based on habit) with «reflective action», which involves actively considering a problem and its consequences [8]. According to Dewey, reflective thinking is the true goal of education.

Developing these ideas, Donald Schön introduced the concept of «reflective practice», distinguishing between «reflection-on-action» (analysis after completion) and «reflection-in-action» (correction of the process «on the fly») [8]. The transition to the latter is a sign of learning mastery.

In parallel, in cognitive psychology, John Flavell introduced the term «metacognition», which encompasses two components: knowledge about cognition (what I know about my cognitive processes) and regulation of cognition (planning, monitoring, evaluation) [9]. Reflection, in this sense, is a tool that activates metacognitive monitoring.

*2. The European approach: cognitive constructivism and pedagogical dialogue.*

Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget, although not focusing directly on reflection, laid the foundations for its understanding. The transition of a child in primary school to the stage of concrete operations means the development of decentralization (the ability to look at a situation from a different point of view) and reversibility (the ability to mentally return to the beginning of an action). It is these cognitive mechanisms that are a necessary prerequisite for a child to be able to «see» their own thoughts or actions as an object of analysis [7].

In modern European pedagogy (in particular, British), great attention is paid to pedagogical conditions. Robin Alexander, in his concept of «Dialogic Teaching», argues that reflection is not born individually, but in a collective, cumulative, and supportive dialogue, where the teacher encourages students not only to respond, but also to justify, analyze, and evaluate different views [10].

*3. Ukrainian psychological school: reflection as a mechanism of self-regulation.*

Ukrainian psychologist G.S. Kostiuk viewed reflection as an inseparable unity of thought processes and self-awareness. He emphasized that it is reflection that allows a person to realize themselves as a subject of activity, to correlate their motives and goals [3].

These ideas were developed in the genetic-psychological theory of academician S.D. Maksimenko. In his concept, reflection is a key mechanism of personality genesis and self-regulation. It is the reflective «pause» that allows the subject to go beyond the situation, comprehend it, and consciously build or adjust the further trajectory of their actions or development [5].

Thus, we consider reflection to be an integrative formation based on cognitive mechanisms (metacognition, according to Flavell; specific operations, according to Piaget) and serves as a tool for personal self-regulation (according to Maksymenko), activated in a dialogical learning environment (according to Alexander and Dewey).

**Presentation of the main material.** The study was conducted at Vinnytsia Primary School No. 5 in Vinnytsia. The sample consisted of 80 students: 40 second-grade students (average age 7,5 years) and 40 fourth-grade students (average age 9,5 years). A set of valid psychodiagnostic techniques adapted to the conditions of Ukrainian schools and free of ideological bias was used:

Reflection diagnosis: An adapted version of the Junior Metacognitive Awareness Inventory (Jr. MAI), based on Flavell's model. The technique allows assessing the level of development of metacognitive components (e.g., «I know when I need help», «I check my work before handing it in»).

Diagnosis of learning motivation: An adapted version of the Scale of Intrinsic versus Extrinsic Orientation by American psychologist Susan Harter (S. Harter). Allows you to determine what dominates in a student: cognitive interest (internal motivation) or orientation towards evaluation and approval (external motivation) [9].

Self-esteem diagnosis: The Ladder technique, which is a standardized tool for identifying the level (overestimated, adequate, underestimated) and adequacy of self-esteem at a given age.

Analysis of the educational environment: Lesson observation chart developed based on R. Alexander's principles of «dialogic teaching» (recording the frequency of reflective, open-ended questions asked by the teacher) [10]. Data processing was performed using Student's t-test (for group comparison) and correlation analysis (Pearson's r) in SPSS.

Empirical analysis of the data obtained allows us not only to confirm the presence of changes, but also to reveal the psychological essence of the dynamics of reflection development and the mechanisms of influence of key factors.

A comparison of the average indicators and percentage ratios between the 2nd and 4th grades (Table 1) reveals a fundamental qualitative shift in the structure of the self-awareness of younger schoolchildren. From situational metacognition to conscious regulation. In the 2nd grade, 65% of students are at a low level of metacognitive awareness (according to Jr. MAI). Empirically, this manifests itself in the fact that their reflection is reactive and situational. The student realizes the mistake only after it has been pointed out by the teacher («I got a bad grade»). They are not capable of monitoring themselves in the process of activity («I don't know if I'm doing it right now») and, even more so, of planning («I just start doing what I can»).

**Table 1.**

**Comparative characteristics of levels of reflection and motivation**

Indicator	Level / Type	2nd grade (n=40)	4th grade (n=40)
Metacognitive awareness	Low (situational)	65%	20%
(adapted from Jr. MAI)	Average (monitoring elements)	30%	55%
	High (conscious regulation)	5%	25%
Personal reflection	External (assessment-oriented)	80%	35%
(based on interviews)	Internal (analysis of conditions/causes)	20%	65%
Dominant motivation	External (evaluation, avoidance)	60%	25%
(according to S. Charter's scale)	Internal (cognitive)	40%	75%

In contrast, in the 4th grade, the proportion of low levels decreases threefold (to 20%), while the proportion of high levels increases fivefold (from 5% to 25%). The most significant is the increase in the average level (55%). This is a «transitional zone», indicating the active formation of metacognitive monitoring. Fourth-grade students begin to 'feel' difficulties in the process of work. They can already say, «This task is similar to the previous one, but there is something different here», or «I started writing and realized that I forgot the rule». This demonstrates the development of cognitive structures, in particular decentralization (according to J. Piaget), – the ability to look at one's own mental activity as if «from the outside».

From external evaluation to internal attribution. The change in personal reflection is even more striking. In the 2nd grade (80% with «external» reflection), the student's 'I' is practically merged with the

teacher's assessment. The typical answer to the question «What did you do well?» is «I was praised». The reason for success or failure is external («the teacher gave me a good grade»).

In the 4th grade (65% with «internal» reflection), there is a radical change in locus of control and causal attribution. Students begin to associate results with their internal states and efforts: «I succeeded because I was attentive», «I made a mistake because I was in a hurry and didn't check», «It was difficult for me because I didn't understand the condition». This is direct evidence of the emergence of subjectivity and the development of self-awareness, as described by G.S. Kostiuk. The child begins to realize that they are the cause of their own academic successes and failures.

Change of «fuel»: from avoidance to interest. The dynamics of motivation (according to S. Harter) explains why the above changes occur. In the 2nd grade (60% with «external» motivation), learning is a means of achieving external benefits (approval, avoidance of punishment). In this case, deep reflection is unnecessary and even energy-consuming. It is enough just to «guess» the correct answer that the teacher expects. The turnaround in the 4th grade (75% with «internal» motivation) means that for most students, the learning process itself becomes a value. Cognitive interest becomes the «fuel» that triggers reflective mechanisms. A student who is interested in how a task is structured will spontaneously reflect on how to solve it. It is important for them not just to get a grade, but to understand.

Correlation analysis (for 4th grade students) revealed not only connections, but also the psychological factors influencing them.

Internal motivation ( $r = 0,61$ ;  $p < 0,01$ ). This is a strong positive correlation. It indicates that internal motivation is not just an «accompanying» factor, but probably the leading condition for the development of reflection. Reflection is a cognitively complex activity. To perform it, a student must make a volitional effort. External motivation («so that mom doesn't scold me») can force a student to complete a task, but it will not force them to analyze how they do it. Only intrinsic interest (according to Ryan and Deci's self-determination theory) generates a desire for mastery, which, in turn, requires constant metacognitive monitoring and correction.

Adequate self-esteem ( $r = 0,45$ ;  $p < 0,05$ ). This is a moderate positive correlation, indicating a complex, nonlinear relationship. Reflection (especially error analysis) is an emotionally threatening process. A student with low self-esteem is prone to avoiding reflection. For them, analyzing mistakes is not a step towards development, but a confirmation of their own worthlessness («I knew I was stupid»). The ego defense mechanism kicks in.

A student with an inflated, inadequate self-esteem also blocks reflection. They use external attribution to explain failures («The task was incorrect», «The teacher doesn't like me»). They don't need to analyze their actions because «the problem is not with them».

Only students with adequate, stable self-esteem are able to separate the evaluation of their actions from the evaluation of their personality. They can admit, «I made a mistake», without concluding, «I am a failure». This emotional security is the foundation on which objective self-analysis is possible [4].

Pedagogical factor (dialogical learning). The results of the observation showed that reflection does not develop in a vacuum. In classes with a monological, directive style of teaching, the teacher himself is the «bearer» of reflection—he alone evaluates, analyzes, and gives feedback. Students in such a system remain passive objects. On the contrary, dialogical learning (according to R. Alexander), where the teacher constantly asks open questions («Why do you think so?», «Could it have been done differently?», «Compare your methods»), forcibly activates reflective processes in students. Reflection becomes socially necessary for participation in the lesson.

The empirical data obtained allow us to formulate a complete picture. The development of reflection in primary school age is a systematic process that moves from external (teacher assessment, external motivation) to internal (self-analysis, cognitive interest).

This transition does not occur automatically with age, but is determined by a triad of factors: the presence of internal motivation to learn, which provides energy for the cognitively complex process of self-analysis; the presence of adequate self-esteem, which acts as an emotional filter that allows one to analyze mistakes without destroying one's «self-concept»; the organization of a dialogical educational environment that «draws» reflection outwards, makes it a subject of discussion, and thus contributes to its internalization.

Thus, the results confirm S.D. Maksimenko's key ideas about the unity of cognitive and personal development, where reflection acts as an integrative mechanism of self-regulation, allowing the student to gradually become a true subject of their own learning activity [4].

The data obtained are consistent with the main theoretical approaches. The dynamics from 2nd to 4th grade illustrate the deepening of cognitive operations (according to Piaget) and the development of metacognitive skills (according to Flavell). The close connection between reflection and motivation and

self-esteem fully confirms the ideas of the Ukrainian psychological school. This proves the thesis of G.S. Kostiuk and S.D. Maksymenko that cognitive processes do not exist in a vacuum but are an integral part of the holistic structure of personality and its self-regulation [4; 5]. Reflection is not just «thinking about thinking»; it is a mechanism of personal development.

**Conclusion.** The development of reflection in primary school age children shows a clear positive trend, consisting in the transition from external situational reflection, focused on results and adult evaluation (2nd grade), to the formation of internal metacognitive (process monitoring) and personal (state analysis) reflection (4th grade). The leading internal psychological factors that positively correlate with the level of reflection are the dominance of internal cognitive motivation (according to S. Harter) and the formation of adequate self-esteem.

The key external pedagogical factor that stimulates the development of reflection is the teacher's use of dialogic teaching practices (according to R. Alexander), which creates the necessary educational environment. The practical significance of the work lies in the advisability of introducing targeted reflection development programs into the NUS practice, which should be based not only on cognitive techniques (such as Jr. MAI), but also on the formation of internal motivation and adequate self-esteem of students.

Prospects for further research are seen in longitudinal research and the development of a formative experiment based on the synthesis of American metacognitive technologies and the genetic-psychological approach of the Ukrainian school.

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## **PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT OF THE INDIVIDUAL IN THE PROCESS OF OVERCOMING STRESSFUL AND TRAUMATIC EVENTS**

*У статті здійснено комплексний аналіз теоретичних засад та практичних підходів до психологічної підтримки особистості в умовах стресових та травматичних подій. Розглядається розмежування понять стресу та психологічної травми, а також їхні психоемоційні, когнітивні та соматичні наслідки. Особлива увага приділяється концепції резильєнтності як здатності до позитивної адаптації та ефективним копінг-стратегіям.*

*Аналізуються основні рівні надання допомоги: самодопомога, соціальна підтримка та професійні методи, такі як когнітивно-поведінкова терапія (КПТ), десенсибілізація та репроцесуалізація рухами очей (EMDR), а також транзактний аналіз (ТА). У роботі вперше в контексті психологічної підтримки в Україні розкрито принципи посттравматичного зростання (PTG) та полівагальної теорії Стівена Порджеса, що обґрунтовують перехід від фокусу на індивідуальному виживанні до формування колективної резильєнтності. Висвітлено невирішені питання, зокрема феномен міжгенераційної травми, і наголошено на необхідності розробки довгострокових реабілітаційних програм.*

*У висновках представлено практичні пропозиції щодо розвитку системної психологічної допомоги в освітній, корпоративній та громадській сферах. Обґрунтовано, що майбутні дослідження мають бути спрямовані на поглиблене вивчення довгострокових наслідків травматичних подій та впровадження інноваційних підходів, що сприятимуть зціленню на рівні суспільства.*

**Ключові слова:** *психологічна травма, посттравматичне зростання, резильєнтність, колективна резильєнтність, полівагальна теорія, психологічна підтримка, міжгенераційна травма, копінг-стратегії.*

*The article provides a comprehensive analysis of the theoretical foundations and practical approaches to psychological support of individuals experiencing stressful and traumatic events. The distinction between the concepts of stress and psychological trauma is examined, as well as their psycho-emotional, cognitive, and somatic consequences. Particular attention is devoted to the concept of resilience as the ability to adapt positively, along with the use of effective coping strategies.*

*The main levels of psychological assistance are analyzed, including self-help, social support, and professional interventions such as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR), and Transactional Analysis (TA). For the first time in the Ukrainian context, the article highlights the principles of Post-Traumatic Growth (PTG) and Stephen Porges' Polyvagal Theory, which substantiate the shift from an individual survival focus toward the formation of collective resilience. The study also addresses unresolved issues, in particular the phenomenon of intergenerational trauma, and emphasizes the need for the development of long-term rehabilitation programs.*

*The conclusions present practical recommendations for the development of a systemic model of psychological support in educational, corporate, and community settings. It is argued that future research should focus on a deeper exploration of the long-term consequences of traumatic events and the implementation of innovative approaches that contribute to healing at the societal level.*

**Keywords:** *psychological trauma, post-traumatic growth, resilience, collective resilience, polyvagal theory, psychological support, intergenerational trauma, coping strategies.*

**Formulation of the problem.** Stressful and traumatic events—such as armed conflicts, natural disasters, personal crises, and large-scale social upheavals—constitute an inevitable, albeit painful, component of human existence. These events exert a profound and often destructive influence on mental health, affecting not only individuals but also societies as a whole. According to the *World Health*

*Organization (WHO)*, more than one billion people worldwide currently suffer from various mental disorders (*WHO, 2025. Mental Health Atlas 2024*), and a significant proportion of these conditions are directly related to exposure to stressful or traumatic experiences. Their impact manifests in the growing prevalence of depressive and anxiety disorders, the development of *Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)*, impaired social adaptation, and a reduction in overall psychological resilience. Modern individuals live in a context of constant change and uncertainty, accompanied by increased psychological tension. For professionals whose work involves intensive interpersonal interaction—such as educators, healthcare providers, military personnel, and social workers—this issue becomes particularly acute. They must support others emotionally while maintaining their own psychological stability. Under these circumstances, the demand for effective strategies aimed at strengthening *psychological (emotional) resilience* has grown significantly. Such resilience is a key prerequisite for mental health, professional efficacy, and social stability. Despite extensive research on stress, coping strategies, and resilience, the issue of internal psychological resources that enable individuals to overcome the long-term consequences of traumatic experiences remains insufficiently explored and requires further scientific inquiry. Therefore, it is necessary to undertake an integrative examination of *psychological resilience* as a systemic characteristic of personality that unites cognitive, emotional, and behavioral components, defining an individual's capacity to maintain adaptability, balance, and coherence in adverse circumstances.

**Analysis of Recent Research and Publications.** Contemporary psychological research consistently confirms that traumatic events constitute one of the major determinants of mental disorders, with their impact manifesting across multiple domains of human functioning.

**Armed conflicts and wars.** Studies conducted in conflict-affected regions indicate that among adolescents exposed to war, the average prevalence of PTSD is approximately 29.4% (Taylor & Jones, *War and PTSD: A Study of Adolescent Populations, European Journal of Psychotraumatology, 2025*). The effects are especially severe among civilians. For example, in Ukraine, WHO data show that after three years of full-scale war, 68% of Ukrainians reported deterioration in their health compared with the pre-war period. Mental disorders are the most widespread health problems, affecting 46% of the population, while diagnosed psychiatric illnesses are present in 41% (*WHO, 2025. Report on the Mental Health Situation in Ukraine*).

**Climate crises and natural disasters.** Researchers have documented a direct correlation between the increased frequency and intensity of extreme weather events—such as floods, droughts, and wildfires—and the worsening of mental health. Individuals exposed to such events demonstrate significantly higher risks of developing PTSD, depression, and anxiety disorders (Caamano-Isorna et al., *Mental Health Effects of Climate Disasters, 2025*). A longitudinal study in Australia revealed that repeated exposure to natural disasters leads to cumulative deterioration of psychological well-being, highlighting the long-term, compounding effects of climate-related trauma (Li & Leppold, *The Lancet Public Health, 2025*).

**Violence.** Domestic and gender-based violence remain among the most pervasive and damaging sources of psychological trauma. According to WHO, one in three women worldwide has experienced physical or sexual violence during her lifetime (*WHO, 2024. Fact Sheet: Violence Against Women*). The psychological consequences are devastating: a French study found that up to 59.7% of women who experienced intimate partner violence met diagnostic criteria for PTSD (Rathier et al., *European Psychiatry, 2024*).

**Forced displacement.** Forced migration represents a distinct form of trauma, entailing loss of home, disruption of social bonds, and economic instability—factors that contribute to profound psychological distress. According to the *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)*, as of 2024, more than 123 million people globally were refugees or internally displaced persons (*UNHCR, 2025. Global Trends Report: Forced Displacement in 2024*). This figure increased by seven million in just one year, underscoring the escalation of the global displacement crisis. In Ukraine, 11.6 million individuals have been internally displaced and 2.1 million have sought refuge abroad since the onset of full-scale invasion. Research indicates that the most vulnerable groups include military personnel, children, the elderly, and internally displaced persons, all of whom require targeted psychological support. Moreover, unprocessed trauma among children and adolescents poses a serious threat to the mental health of future generations, as trauma can be transmitted intergenerationally through family and societal mechanisms.

**Economic crises and financial instability.** Empirical evidence demonstrates a strong association between economic hardship and deteriorating mental health. Studies conducted during financial recessions reveal that unemployment is one of the strongest predictors of depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem (*ResearchGate, 2025. Psychological Effects of Economic Recession and Unemployment*). A recent survey in the United States showed that 83% of respondents reported financial stress as a major contributor to

psychological difficulties (*LifeStance, 2025. How Financial Stress Impacts Americans' Mental Health*). Younger generations (Millennials and Gen Z) are particularly vulnerable, often forced to choose between paying for therapy and covering basic needs. Financial strain also contributes to family conflict and divorce due to heightened hostility and reduced emotional support (*ResearchGate, 2025. Financial Strain and Family Relationships*).

**Pandemics and public health crises.** Research indicates that the COVID-19 pandemic triggered a marked increase in depression and anxiety. Global data reveal that up to 41% of young adults aged 18–34 report functional impairments linked to prolonged pandemic-related distress.

**Technological and cyber threats.** Despite their advantages, modern technologies have become a significant source of stress and secondary traumatization. Studies show that continuous exposure to information flow—commonly referred to as “information overload”—induces anxiety and emotional exhaustion, while cyberbullying increases rates of depression among adolescents by up to 70% (*Cropink, 50+ Alarming Social Media and Mental Health Statistics, 2025*). Furthermore, cybersecurity breaches such as data theft have profound psychological effects, eliciting feelings of helplessness, fear, and shame. Researchers compare such experiences to PTSD-like symptoms, noting that loss of control over personal data can be as psychologically traumatizing as physical assault (*Acronym Solutions, 2024. The Hidden Impact of Cyber Attacks on Mental Health*).

The analysis of these studies underscores the necessity of systematizing existing knowledge on integrative approaches to psychological support that encompass not only professional interventions but also individual self-help strategies and the role of social support in trauma recovery.

**Formulation of the Research Aim.** The aim of this article is to provide a comprehensive analysis of contemporary approaches to ensuring psychological support for individuals in the process of overcoming stressful and traumatic events. Specifically, the article seeks to: (a) identify the principal psycho-emotional consequences of exposure to stressful and traumatic experiences; (b) review existing self-help strategies and forms of social support; (c) analyze the effectiveness of professional psychological interventions; and (d) formulate recommendations for improving the system of psychological support under crisis conditions.

**Presentation of the Main Material.** To conduct a thorough analysis of mechanisms of psychological support, it is essential to clearly differentiate the basic constructs of **stress** and psychological trauma. Historically, the concept of stress was first introduced by W. B. Cannon (*Bodily Changes in Pain, Hunger, Fear and Rage, 1915*), who conceptualized it as emotional tension that triggers the physiological *fight-or-flight* response (Nauholnyk, 2015). Later, H. Selye reconceptualized stress as a universal adaptive response of the organism to any stimulus, distinguishing distress and eustress. Distress refers to a destructive response to threatening circumstances, whereas eustress denotes an activating response to positive or neutral influences (e.g., good news) that maintain organismic tone without posing a threat (Nauholnyk, 2015).

By contrast, psychological trauma is a qualitatively different phenomenon, defined as the consequence of an event that exceeds ordinary human experience and elicits intense fear, helplessness, or horror. According to the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5)* of the American Psychiatric Association (APA, 2013), a traumatic event involves actual or threatened death, serious injury, or sexual violence. Unlike stress—an adaptive reaction—trauma is maladaptive, as it “freezes” information-processing, resulting in intrusive memories, emotional dysregulation, and functional impairments (van der Kolk, 2014).

Importantly, the same event may affect different individuals in unequal ways. What is experienced by one person as intense but manageable stress may constitute profound psychological trauma for another. This variability depends on multiple factors: subjective appraisal of threat to life or integrity; personal resources (stress tolerance, availability of adaptive coping strategies, prior mastery experiences); and social support (support from family, peers, and community markedly increases the likelihood of navigating traumatic experiences without long-term adverse sequelae) (Slobodianyk, 2024). Thus, the boundary between stress and trauma is determined less by the objective danger than by subjective experience and the psyche’s capacity to integrate the event.

Human responses to stress may be volitional (guided by intentional regulation and conscious decision-making) or automatic, shaped by temperament and constitutional traits, or reduced to reflexive patterns through repetition, requiring little or no effortful control.

A central construct in the context of adapting to traumatic events is psychological resilience. Resilience is understood as a dynamic process characterized by an individual’s capacity for positive adaptation under significant adversity. It is not an inborn trait; rather, it emerges through interaction between internal factors (e.g., optimism, self-regulation) and external factors (e.g., social support).

Evidence indicates that resilient individuals show lower risk for PTSD and depression after trauma exposure, making resilience a cornerstone of any support program. Within this framework, coping strategies—the deliberate efforts used to manage stressors—play a pivotal role. Empirical findings demonstrate that adaptive coping (e.g., active problem solving, cognitive reappraisal, seeking social support) enhances resilience, whereas maladaptive coping (e.g., avoidance, psychoactive substance use) is associated with greater risk of PTSD and depression. Studies of combat veterans show that active coping (planning, positive reframing) substantially reduces the likelihood of PTSD, underscoring its importance in psychological adaptation to trauma (Southwick et al., *Resilience and Mental Health*, 2015).

The impact of stressful and traumatic events extends beyond mental disorders to profound somatic consequences. Contemporary psychoneuroimmunology demonstrates that prolonged stress and trauma disrupt endocrine, immune, and nervous-system functioning. Chronic cortisol exposure contributes to elevated blood pressure and hyperglycemia, increasing the risk of cardiovascular disease and diabetes (McEwen, 2005). Trauma is also linked to heightened inflammatory processes associated with autoimmune disease, irritable bowel syndrome, and chronic pain (Danese & McEwen, 2021). Thus, psychological trauma leaves not only an emotional but also a distinct biological trace, necessitating integrative treatment approaches.

Symptomatology related to stress and trauma is multifaceted and spans several levels:

- Emotional: intense fear, anger, guilt or shame, sadness, despair; emotional lability, irritability, anhedonia.
- Cognitive: memory disturbances (gaps or intrusive recollections), attentional difficulties, derealization or detachment, and negative beliefs about the self, the world, and the future.
- Physiological: chronic fatigue, sleep disturbances (insomnia, nightmares), headaches, muscle tension, gastrointestinal problems, appetite changes, and heightened sensitivity to noise and other stimuli.
- Behavioral: avoidance of trauma-related cues, social withdrawal, aggression, increased use of alcohol or drugs, and impulsive or risky behaviors.

Responses to stress and trauma are highly individualized; there is no single “correct” way to experience them. The above reactions are *normative* responses to extreme circumstances. However, for the sake of public mental health, psychoeducational efforts should emphasize timely help-seeking when symptoms become persistent and interfere with functioning. A comprehensive support framework spans three interacting levels: individual, social, and professional.

#### Self-Help Strategies

This is the initial and most accessible level of support, aimed at restoring a sense of control over one’s condition. Effective strategies include:

- Positive orientation and optimism. An optimistic stance—viewing difficulties as temporary and surmountable—is a core correlate of resilience; it fosters adaptive coping and lower stress burden.
- Physical activity. Regular exercise (e.g., aerobic activity, yoga) increases endorphins, improves mood, and reduces anxiety; it also diverts ruminative attention and strengthens overall stress tolerance (Stuckey & Noble, 2010).
- Balanced nutrition. Dietary patterns rich in omega-3 fatty acids, B-vitamins, and magnesium support nervous-system functioning and reduce depressive symptoms (Sarris et al., 2015).
- Expressive writing/journaling. Structured reflection facilitates emotion processing, cognitive organization, and self-regulation.
- Creative/arts-based practices. Art therapy and other creative modalities (drawing, sculpting, music) provide powerful nonverbal channels for emotion expression and trauma processing, restoring inner coherence (Sunderland, 2019).

#### Social Support

Social connectedness is a key protective factor in trauma recovery. Support from family, peers, and community fosters belonging, normalizes experience through dialogue, and reduces stress (Slobodanyk, 2024). Community and volunteer initiatives offer both emotional and tangible assistance, reinforcing collective resources.

#### Professional Interventions

When self-help and social resources are insufficient, professional care is indicated. Evidence-based modalities include individual and group psychotherapy, crisis counseling, and targeted training (e.g., psychosocial skills, stress-management). These approaches provide comprehensive intervention directed at processing traumatic memories and building adaptive skills. Group therapy. Offers a safe, validating context for mutual support and perspective-taking; effectively complements individual therapy and reduces

PTSD, depression, and anxiety symptoms. Psychoeducation. Delivers accessible knowledge about trauma responses and coping, reducing shame and self-blame and empowering clients to engage actively in recovery. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT). One of the most validated treatments for trauma; it targets cognitive distortions (e.g., guilt, self-blame) and behavioral patterns (e.g., avoidance), while cultivating adaptive coping. Trials and meta-analyses show robust efficacy across populations (e.g., veterans, survivors of violence), with durable gains and increases in post-traumatic growth (Foa et al., 2007; McEwen, 2005). Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR). Clinical and neurobiological data indicate that bilateral stimulation during trauma memory processing reduces affective intensity. fMRI studies document decreased amygdala/thalamus activation and increased prefrontal engagement after EMDR, consistent with improved emotion regulation and adaptive memory reconsolidation (van der Kolk, 2014; Shapiro, 2001). Trauma-Focused CBT (TF-CBT) for children and adolescents. The construction of a trauma narrative with caregiver involvement reduces PTSD, depression, and anxiety, and improves emotion regulation and social functioning (Cohen et al., 2017). Transactional Analysis (TA). By analyzing transactions among the Parent, Adult, and Child ego states, TA helps identify trauma-linked life scripts and early decisions formed under stress, and to re-decide from the Adult state. This supports autonomy, healthier relationships, and more adaptive coping (Berne, 1961).

Despite advances, important long-term questions remain. Large-scale crises (wars, genocides, pandemics, natural disasters, mass displacement) can produce “traumatic waves” across generations (Frounfelker & Plouffe, 2019). Intergenerational trauma may manifest as intrusive memories, heightened anxiety, and depressive vulnerability among descendants of those directly exposed. Most studies to date emphasize short-term outcomes; by contrast, the psychosocial impact on cohorts growing up under chronic stress and instability is underexplored. Sustainable support requires long-duration rehabilitation programs that address individual and systemic, intergenerational effects—and the preparation of specialists equipped to meet these challenges.

Our perspective on psychological support in traumatic contexts should move beyond merely mitigating negative sequelae toward Post-Traumatic Growth (PTG)—positive psychological changes that emerge through struggling with extreme adversity (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1996). PTG encompasses five domains:

- improved interpersonal relationships (greater empathy and closeness);
- recognition of new possibilities (changed life course, emerging interests);
- enhanced personal strength (greater sense of vulnerability *and* agency);
- spiritual/existential shifts;
- a deepened appreciation of life.

PTG is both individual and collective. Individual transformation fosters collective resilience and community strengthening.

This view aligns with Polyvagal Theory (S. Porges). Beyond survival responses (fight–flight–freeze), the mammalian *ventral vagal* system supports social engagement and co-regulation. Extending this framework to collective processes, Valentin (2025) introduces the notion of a Collective Nervous System, positing that trauma and recovery unfold interpersonally through co-regulatory dynamics. Biologically, our next adaptive step is not faster technology or fiercer competition, but the development of relational intelligence—learning to co-regulate across cultures and generations. Effective support methods should therefore target collective healing, establishing durable foundations for population mental health.

Grounded in these principles, we propose the following system-level measures to enhance psychological support at the collective level:

1. Education. Implement psychoeducational curricula in schools with obligatory empathy-building exercises; create “regulation rooms” where children and adolescents can practice emotion self-regulation through play and creative activities.

2. Corporate settings. Establish a norm of opening meetings with brief stabilization and co-attunement techniques to reduce collective stress, enhance a supportive climate, and improve productivity and well-being.

3. Community initiatives. Organize collective arts-based projects (choirs, shared reading, breathwork, drumming circles, clay modeling) at cultural centers and libraries to provide safe spaces for co-regulation and community-level healing.

In parallel, it is crucial to strengthen individual-level services that are accessible and tailored:

1. Personalized coping plans. Develop platforms to assess individual resilience resources and adaptive mechanisms, yielding tailored recommendations to strengthen psychological resilience.

2. Accessible online services. Provide free, user-friendly telepsychology to reach populations with limited in-person access or high help-seeking barriers.
3. Age-diverse grief-support groups. Establish specialized groups for bereavement processing in safe, validating contexts that normalize grief and foster community belonging.
4. Veterans' programs. Expand comprehensive reintegration services (vocational training, psychological care, social integration) to support post-traumatic growth and successful community return.

#### Conclusions and Directions for Future Research

In summary, a comprehensive analysis of contemporary approaches to psychological support in the context of stressful and traumatic events indicates the need to reconsider traditional paradigms. The focus should shift beyond merely mitigating negative sequelae toward a model oriented to post-traumatic growth (PTG) and the cultivation of collective resilience. This transition—from individual survival to communal healing—is pivotal for ensuring the long-term mental well-being of society.

Particular emphasis should be placed on implementing a comprehensive, multi-level framework that integrates individual, social, and professional strategies. Evidence-based practices such as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) and Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) have demonstrated effectiveness in addressing the acute consequences of trauma. At the same time, strengthening individual resilience requires systems that enable people to identify their own adaptive mechanisms and develop personalized stress-coping plans.

Key avenues for future research and practice include:

- Intergenerational trauma. In-depth investigation is needed into the phenomenon of “*traumatic waves*” transmitted across generations. This entails designing long-term, national-level rehabilitation programs and specialized approaches to psychological care that address not only individual but also systemic sequelae of traumatic experiences.
- Applied polyvagal frameworks. Stephen Porges' Polyvagal Theory provides a theoretical basis for advancing collective healing through the development of *relational intelligence* and co-regulation. Further studies should focus on designing and implementing methods that biologically attune people to one another—for example, group arts-based techniques that facilitate collective recovery processes.
- Systemic integration of psychological services. The present findings underscore the urgent need to embed psychological education and support within educational, corporate, and community institutions. Future research should evaluate the effectiveness of initiatives such as school-based psychoeducation and stabilization practices in corporate settings, with the aim of establishing a new social norm in which mental well-being is viewed as a shared responsibility.

Adopting a systems approach to psychological support is not merely a response to current challenges but a strategic step toward sustainable societal development. The design of comprehensive programs that account for both individual needs and collective dynamics should be considered a priority for forthcoming scholarly and practical endeavors.

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## **THEORETICAL ANALYSIS OF THE USE OF CREATIVE ACTIVITY OF ELDERLY PEOPLE TO OVERCOME PERSONAL ALIENATION**

*У статті представлено теоретичний аналіз феномену особистісного відчуження в осіб похилого віку та обґрунтовано можливості творчої діяльності як засобу його психологічного подолання. Актуальність дослідження визначається зростанням частки людей старшого віку у структурі населення та поширенням психосоціальних проблем, пов'язаних із самотністю, втратою соціальних ролей і зниженням відчуття власної значущості. Особистісне відчуження у старості трактується як складний психологічний стан, що проявляється у зниженні рівня самоприйняття, емоційній відстороненості та ослабленні міжособистісних зв'язків. На основі міждисциплінарного огляду філософських, соціологічних і психологічних джерел визначено основні детермінанти цього явища: соціальну ізоляцію, когнітивний спад і екзистенційні переживання, пов'язані з усвідомленням кінцівки життя.*

*Доведено, що творча активність — як індивідуальна, так і колективна — виступає адаптивним і компенсаторним ресурсом, який сприяє відновленню цілісності «Я» та посиленню суб'єктивного відчуття життєвої енергії. Механізми цього впливу розглянуто через призму концепцій самоактуалізації (А. Маслоу), індивідуальності (К. Юнг) та екзистенційної творчості (Е. Фромм). Залучення людей похилого віку до різних видів творчої діяльності (арт-терапія, музика, літературна творчість, декоративно-ужиткове мистецтво) сприяє емоційній виразності, соціальній інтеграції та відновленню сенсу життя. У статті підкреслено, що творчість виступає не лише розважальним або терапевтичним методом, а й формою екзистенційної підтримки, яка допомагає долати відчуження, зберігати ідентичність і підтримувати психічне благополуччя у пізній дорослості.*

**Ключові слова:** особистісне відчуження; люди похилого віку; творча діяльність; самоактуалізація; екзистенційна психологія; геронтопсихологія.

*The article presents a theoretical analysis of the phenomenon of personal alienation in elderly people and explores the potential of creative activity as a means of its psychological overcoming. The relevance of the study is determined by the growing demographic trend of population aging and the accompanying psychosocial problems associated with isolation, loss of social roles, and reduced sense of self-value in later life. Personal alienation in old age is interpreted as a complex psychological state characterized by decreased self-acceptance, emotional detachment, and weakening of interpersonal relationships. Based on an interdisciplinary review of philosophical, sociological, and psychological literature, the author identifies the main determinants of this phenomenon, including social exclusion, cognitive decline, and existential crisis associated with awareness of life finitude.*

*The article substantiates that creative activity—both individual and collective—acts as a compensatory and adaptive resource capable of restoring the integrity of the self and reinforcing subjective vitality. The mechanisms of this influence are analyzed through the concepts of self-actualization (A. Maslow), individuation (C. Jung), and existential creativity (E. Fromm). Participation in creative processes (art therapy, music, literature, handicrafts) promotes the reestablishment of social connections, emotional expressiveness, and a renewed sense of purpose. The author emphasizes that creativity enables elderly individuals to re-symbolize their life experience, integrate past and present, and transform passive aging into active self-realization.*

*The paper concludes that the use of creative activity in gerontopsychological practice should be considered not only as a recreational or therapeutic method, but also as a form of existential support that helps overcome alienation, preserve identity, and maintain mental well-being in late adulthood. The theoretical analysis provides a basis for further empirical research aimed at developing comprehensive psycho-social programs fostering creative self-expression among the elderly.*

**Keywords:** *personal alienation; elderly people; creative activity; self-actualization; existential psychology; gerontopsychology.*

**Problem statement.** Each person has their own, distinct, psychological characteristics and peculiarities, each is differently adapted to modern, changing society. To ensure the harmony of development and life in each age period, it is necessary to fulfill a number of conditions, in particular, the creative nature of the lifestyle, tolerance for change, the ability to notice and perceive the hidden possibilities of life situations. It is necessary to be especially attentive to the harmony of life at such an age stage as old age. In this age period, life becomes special due to the fact that the physical, emotional and psychological resources to ensure the above-mentioned harmony are becoming less and less, and each person can experience negative psycho-emotional states up to and including personal alienation. An important condition for overcoming these states in old age and active life in this age period is the ability to reveal and realize one's creative potential.

An active attitude to one's life in old age, when older people are able to adequately compensate for negative changes in their own lives, experience losses that occur more and more often, ensure positive development and less frequent experiences of negative psycho-emotional states, which in turn can cause personal alienation. The same applies to those who have a meaning of being, in whose lives positive emotional states prevail, who strive to get to know other individuals, to communicate with them. Creative activity, teaching new things, and transforming attitudes to events and situations in life will contribute to active and productive overcoming of the state of personal alienation and ensuring a harmonious life of older people.

Modernity creates a need to find new opportunities for the creative development of older people through the actualization of accumulated experience and individual achievements at previous stages of personal development in order to ensure active and productive old age.

**The purpose of the article.** To analyze the possibilities and features of using and developing creative activity of elderly people as a means of overcoming personal alienation.

**Presentation of the main material.** The phenomenon of aging represents a complex psychological and social process that reflects not only biological decline but also the transformation of an individual's value system, self-perception, and worldview. In modern conditions of social acceleration, informational overload, and shifting social roles, the elderly person often faces the challenge of maintaining internal balance and meaning in a constantly changing environment. Each person has unique psychological characteristics and adaptive mechanisms that determine how they respond to such challenges. However, at older ages, when physical strength, energy, and emotional flexibility gradually decrease, the need for psychological and existential resources becomes especially relevant. One of these crucial resources is creative activity, which enables an individual to overcome the state of passivity, restore self-expression, and maintain personal integrity.

Old age as a psychological stage has its own contradictions. On the one hand, it is a time of accumulated wisdom and life experience; on the other, it is often accompanied by the feeling of limitation, loss, and alienation from the dynamic rhythm of society. The experience of personal alienation in the elderly can manifest through estrangement from one's social environment, a sense of isolation, and loss of connection with one's own inner world. According to existential and humanistic psychology, alienation emerges when a person loses contact with authentic values and ceases to feel themselves as an active subject of life. In this context, the restoration of activity, meaning, and connection with others becomes the central psychological task of late adulthood.

The ability to actualize creative potential allows an elderly individual to reframe life experience and transform negative emotions into constructive activity. Creativity functions as a psychological mediator that connects past and present, helping a person reinterpret previous experiences and transform them into new meanings. When elderly individuals engage in creative work—painting, poetry, music, gardening, crafts, storytelling—they experience a sense of continuity and self-worth. Such activities reinforce the feeling of autonomy, preserve cognitive flexibility, and stimulate social interaction, all of which counteract the processes of isolation and alienation.

Creativity also has a therapeutic dimension: it provides emotional relief, reduces anxiety and depressive symptoms, and enhances overall well-being. Art therapy and expressive practices, for instance, help externalize unspoken emotions and transform them into aesthetic forms that can be shared and understood by others. This process fosters communication and emotional resonance within the social environment. Moreover, creative self-expression serves as a means of symbolic immortality — through

creative products, a person leaves a trace that continues beyond biological existence, thereby reducing existential anxiety and fear of aging.

An important aspect of overcoming personal alienation in late adulthood is the re-evaluation of life experience. Modern psychology emphasizes the necessity of integrating life events into a coherent narrative. According to E. Erikson's theory of psychosocial development, the central task of old age is achieving integrity rather than despair. A person who can creatively reinterpret their past and find meaning in their life trajectory attains a sense of completeness and peace. In contrast, fixation on losses, regrets, and unrealized potential leads to emotional exhaustion and alienation. Therefore, creative activity, as a process of symbolic transformation, helps restore coherence between the "experienced self" and the "present self," ensuring a stable sense of identity.

Equally significant is the social function of creativity. Engaging in collective creative projects—community art, intergenerational workshops, volunteer teaching—strengthens interpersonal connections and fosters the feeling of belonging. Such interactions reduce loneliness and promote mutual understanding between generations. Through creativity, older adults can share their experiences, wisdom, and skills with others, fulfilling the need for recognition and contribution. In this way, creativity serves not only as a personal coping strategy but also as a social integrator that connects individual and collective dimensions of life.

The conditions of modern society, with its focus on innovation, productivity, and youthfulness, often marginalize older individuals, depriving them of opportunities for active participation. This marginalization intensifies the feeling of alienation. Therefore, creating institutional and community-based opportunities for the creative self-realization of elderly people becomes an important socio-psychological task. Educational programs, lifelong learning initiatives, cultural centers, and online creative platforms can serve as resources for maintaining cognitive activity and social engagement. The inclusion of elderly individuals in creative and educational contexts provides them not only with psychological support but also with a renewed sense of usefulness and social relevance.

The harmony of life in old age depends largely on the ability to adapt to inevitable changes while preserving inner vitality and a sense of meaning. Creativity becomes the bridge between acceptance and transformation, between reflection on the past and active participation in the present. It allows the elderly person to experience the fullness of being, even under conditions of physical decline, and to find beauty and value in everyday existence. In this regard, creative activity should be considered not only as an auxiliary form of leisure but as a key psychological strategy for self-renewal and for overcoming personal alienation.

Thus, in the face of demographic aging and increasing psychosocial challenges, fostering the creative potential of older adults becomes a priority direction in psychological and social practice. Supporting creativity in late adulthood ensures emotional stability, personal integrity, and existential fulfillment—components that form the basis of a truly harmonious and meaningful old age.

In the modern world, due to the increase in life expectancy, the issue of individual activity throughout life and personal development of an elderly person, overcoming negative psycho-emotional states associated with aging and the manifestation of their personal and creative activity is increasingly being raised (L. Antsiferova, E. Rybalko, M. Ermolaeva, A. Liderev, V. Druzhinin, E. Chueva, O. Krasnova, O. Berezina, V. Naumova, etc.) [5; 6; 7].

L. Antsiferova formulated several provisions regarding the development of the personality in old age, which are simultaneously based on the ideas of reduction and enrichment of mental capabilities. The scientist claims that involuntional changes are correlated with neoplasms of a progressive nature, and are aimed at overcoming the destructive phenomena of gerontogenesis and achieving a new level of self-realization of the personality in the world, and the presence of abilities and skills to adequately correlate external conditions with one's own aspirations, goals and motives, awareness and acceptance of the formed system of values of one's own life allow a person in old age to lead an independent, active, responsible and meaningful life [3, p. 89].

The advantage of old age is that the form and type of employment are mostly chosen by the person independently, that is, an elderly person, already less burdened with responsibilities, can choose for himself what and how to do in his free time. However, often the problem is that elderly people do not have the desire to choose anything. N. Shakhmatov, argues that the form and nature of employment are of secondary importance and can be very diverse, but the desire for activity and employment is what fills life in old age with meaning [7].

In old age, the ability to generalize life experience appears, which is very important in the process of choosing employment and spending free time [6]. Studies by K. Strashnikova and M. Tulchinsky have

proven that in old age, the active formation of motivation for activities with an aesthetic orientation occurs. O. Berezina found that with the "correct" attitude to aging, late adulthood can become a period of development and creative flowering, because the preservation of high vitality and working capacity of a person in old age is facilitated by: the level of education, occupation, maturity of the personality, etc. Many men and women who have reached retirement age demonstrate high preservation of health and intellectual functions, and when studying the creative activity of the elderly, it was found that the need for self-expression (writing poetry, drawing, studying something, etc.) is felt by 74% of people [5]. O. Berezina concluded that the creative development of the personality in late adulthood leads to the activation of the personality's adaptive mechanisms and a decrease in the influence of negative factors on the aging process, and creative activity itself does not disappear with age, but manifests itself in a different way.

Internal and external psychological characteristics are the condition and driving force that encourage creativity, and are determined by the environment and genetic predisposition (R. Schmidt). These psychological factors can be stimulants or inhibitors, that is, stimulate or slow down the development of creative activity in older people.

The personality in creative activity within the framework of the psychological approach is considered as a subject of creative activity and the creator of cultural production processes, which implies the initiative of the personality, selectivity, freedom of choice and preferences, a high level of independence, where at the same time the thematic group provides for a high degree of organization of the course of classes, which is achieved by the interactivity of the process, by focusing the attention of participants on significant topics of classes and technology of the process and forms the basis of the purposefulness of creative activity [6]. Research on the issues of personal adaptation recognize the process of creative activity as a variant of a protective adaptive coping strategy, which has a relatively highly organized complex character and activates the physical, emotional, cognitive and behavioral spheres of personal functioning (V. Ababkov , M. Perre ; R. Lazarus ) [6]. A. Kopytin believes that the process of artistic creativity is characterized by adaptive behavior that stimulates the communicative needs of the individual, serves as a distraction from a negative situation, which is an effective mechanism for reducing the obstacle to the participant's entry into the stages of actualization and optimization of personal resources in the old age period, such as mobilization of latent resources, resolution of life contradictions and acceptance of oneself in a new status, significantly influencing the development of social communication skills and the development of creative potential [6].

Creative manifestations of older people are possible under certain conditions, to which L. Antsiferova refers:

- an internal need to be included;
- constructive psychological attitude and trust in others;
- adequate perception of the present;
- optimal attitude towards the future;
- relatively diverse interests directed at oneself and others;
- positive solution to the problems of the completed stages of life;
- life experience;
- wisdom;
- psychological independence;
- ability and need for social contacts [3].

The above-mentioned components, in turn, contribute to overcoming personal alienation. Therefore, in old age, acquiring the meaning of life, experiencing its value and uniqueness, understanding and realizing the vast life experience; self-knowledge, self-regulation, self-organization, can encourage an elderly person to develop creative activity.

Surprisingly interesting is the overseas exploration, where ongoing studies examining choral groups, theater training, and visual arts for seniors demonstrate that creative activities can significantly improve the health, well-being, and independence of older adults.

Dr. L. Onken of NIA's Division of Behavioral and Social Research states that current researchers are interested in studying how participation in artistic activities may be linked to improved cognitive function, memory, self-esteem, and overall psychological well-being in older adults. Scientists are also interested in studying the use of music to reduce behavioral symptoms of dementia (stress, aggression, and apathy), and what kind of music will help improve and develop social interaction.

D. Johnson, PhD, of the University of California, conducted a clinical trial called " Community of Voices " to examine the effects of community choir participation on the health and well-being of nearly

400 older adults aged 60 years and older, randomly selected from 12 senior centers in San Francisco. The primary study was conducted immediately, 6 months later, and 12 months (1 year after completion), and the study had six intervention and six control groups. Each choir met once a week for 90-minute sessions for 44 weeks and then performed in several informal concerts. During weekly rehearsals, professional choir directors from the San Francisco Community Music Center were trained to ensure that their activities promoted the health and well-being of older adults. A unique aspect of the study was its use by community partners to recruit and retain a large group of racially and ethnically diverse and low-income older adults, which had significant social outcomes. Participation in a community choir has shown positive results within the first 6 months, including a decrease in feelings of loneliness and an increase in interest in life. D. Johnson particularly noted the positive function of the choir, which was a regular opportunity to meet new people, build social support and increase the sense of belonging among older people. Diverse and active social contacts, inclusion in community social processes are very important preventive measures in overcoming personal alienation. Access to regular creative and artistic activities in diverse low-income communities is vital for older people to remain active and participate in the life of their community.

The experience of Northwestern University is interesting for analysis and imitation. Darby Morhardt, a senior research fellow at the Center for Cognitive Neuroscience and Alzheimer's Disease in Mesulam, says improvisational theater can help older adults with early-stage dementia be socially active and improve their quality of life. The program, developed in 2010 by Northwestern and the Lookingglass Theater Company in Chicago, aims to improve the quality of life for people living with Alzheimer's disease and related disorders. The Memory Ensemble, a group of 69 people, learn to use their instincts, creativity, and spontaneity to explore and create improvisational theater. Over the course of the eight-week program, groups of 10 to 15 participants, ages 50 to 90, attend 90-minute sessions that are purposefully repetitive and follow a set pattern. Two facilitators - a clinical social worker and an improvisational theatre artist - accompany participants in all activities. Many exercises have a training basis and include the practice of observation, listening and using imagination to find creative solutions. For example, the mood of participants is assessed at registration using "smiling faces", a physical warm-up and relaxation exercises for breathing regulation are performed.

co-founder, Christine Mary Dunford, Ph.D., of the Lookingglass Theatre Company, says the setting is designed to put participants in a safe but challenging environment where they can experience anxiety. However, participants are given the following instructions in advance: "When I feel anxious or uncertain, I can stop, breathe, observe, go back to my fantasy, and then the answer will come." As a result, participants have been found to feel more accomplished, empowered, and responsible. Morhardt says there are limitations to treating people with dementia, because as the conditions and tasks progress, communicating with words can become a challenge, so the focus of the work is still on nonverbal means of expressing one's emotions, feelings, and thoughts. It is particularly important that the program does not aim to slow down the development of the disease or improve the cognitive functions of an elderly person, the program is aimed at helping people with dementia enjoy their lives, that is, the social aspect of the life of elderly people becomes the primary and especially significant. Which in turn confirms the importance of the social aspect of personal alienation and the use of interpersonal interaction to prevent and overcome it.

Preliminary results show that participation in the Memory Ensemble improves mood, reduces anxiety and increases feelings of belonging, normality and destigmatization, says Dr. K. M. Dunford, with participants also reporting feelings of achievement, empowerment, opportunity and self-discovery. Future plans include developing a training program for psychotherapists, researchers, social workers, art therapists and theatre professionals based on the findings. The research suggests that theatre can be used to address issues such as dementia in older people, making it particularly effective in cases of social isolation where social interaction and engagement are key coping techniques.

Confirming the results of previous studies, the study of the relationship between music and well-being in old age is also supported by the National Institutes of Health (National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Center for the Performing Arts (Center for the Performing Arts) named after John F. Kennedy in Washington, in collaboration with the National Endowment for the Arts (National Endowment for the Arts (NEA)) launched the "Sound Health", which aims to expand knowledge about how music affects the brain. In the context of the development of this topic, at an NIH workshop in January 2017, a group of medical experts, scientists, music therapists, performers, and artists discussed how to organize research on how the brain processes music and how this research can be implemented and applied in clinical settings, and recommendations were made at the workshop for further development of this field of research. In 2017-2018, according to the above-mentioned program, a series of performances, lectures, and workshops were

held at the Kennedy Center, which brought together leading researchers and performers to explore the intersection of music and science. NIH plans to develop and implement basic and applied science initiatives, improve methodology, and infrastructure to support additional large-scale research. Dr. Onken argues that studying the mechanisms by which creative activity can benefit the health and well-being of older people will create opportunities to create a solid foundation for developing programs to ensure and improve the health and well-being of older people. That is, the mentioned topic of ensuring continuous development and ensuring positive and happy old age is currently very relevant, actively developed and researched.

**Conclusions.** The analysis of theoretical and empirical studies has led to the conclusion that creative activity does not decrease with age, but on the contrary has the ability to develop under the conditions of the presence of certain personal traits and the appropriate organization of external circumstances. External psychological factors that contribute to the development of creative activity include: acceptance and valuelessness of society, the organization of an appropriate "safe" environment, an atmosphere of creativity. Old age can be the most pleasant time of life if you consciously adhere to certain rules: take care of your physiological and mental health throughout your life; have a favorite job; maintain an optimistic attitude; be internally independent of other people and surrounding conditions, developing creative activity, which in its complex will help prevent negative psycho-emotional states that can cause personal alienation.

Research into music, theater, dance, creative writing, and other creative activities that older adults can engage in shows promise for improving quality of life and well-being for older adults. The benefits can range from improved cognitive function, memory, and self-esteem to reduced stress and increased social interaction, which is especially important in times of social isolation.

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**PSYCHOLOGICAL PECULIARITIES OF VOLUNTEERS' STRESS RESILIENCE  
DURING THE MARTIAL LAW PERIOD**

*У статті представлено результати теоретико-емпіричного дослідження психологічних особливостей стресостійкості волонтерів у період воєнного стану. Розкрито сутність стресостійкості як інтегративної особистісної властивості, що забезпечує здатність індивіда ефективно функціонувати, зберігати емоційну рівновагу та адаптуватися до впливу стресогенних чинників. Наголошується, що волонтерська діяльність у сучасних умовах супроводжується значними психоемоційними навантаженнями, необхідністю швидкого прийняття рішень і постійною взаємодією з людьми, які перебувають у кризових ситуаціях, що підвищує ризики емоційного виснаження. Стресостійкість визначається як провідний чинник психологічного благополуччя волонтерів, тісно пов'язаний із когнітивною гнучкістю, емоційною саморегуляцією, рівнем самодовіри, соціальною підтримкою та здатністю до позитивного переосмислення складних життєвих обставин. Узагальнено наукові підходи до розуміння феномену стресостійкості та наведено результати емпіричного аналізу її структурних компонентів і рівнів вираженості серед волонтерів, залучених до гуманітарної діяльності під час воєнного стану. Встановлено, що більшість досліджуваних характеризується середнім рівнем стресостійкості, що свідчить про достатній потенціал адаптації до напружених соціально-психологічних умов. Виявлено позитивний зв'язок між показниками стресостійкості, копінг-стратегіями «концентрація на емоціях і їх активне вираження», «використання заспокійливих засобів» та рівнем довіри до світу. Кореляційний аналіз виявив певну суперечливість копінг-механізмів: поряд із конструктивними способами подолання напруження деякі волонтери застосовують неадаптивні стратегії емоційної регуляції, що свідчить про потребу у розвитку психологічних навичок самоконтролю. Позитивний зв'язок між рівнем стресостійкості та довірою до світу засвідчує, що оптимістичне сприйняття соціальної реальності виконує функцію внутрішнього психологічного ресурсу, який підвищує адаптивність особистості та знижує рівень тривожності. Така довіра сприяє формуванню впевненості, внутрішньої стабільності й стійкості до дії кризових факторів. Отримані результати акцентують на необхідності організації системної психологічної підтримки волонтерів, орієнтованої на формування навичок емоційної саморегуляції, розвитку самодовіри та підвищення психологічної стійкості. Формування стресостійкості розглядається як багатовимірний процес, що інтегрує когнітивні, емоційні та поведінкові компоненти й забезпечує збереження психологічного здоров'я та ефективності діяльності волонтерів у період воєнного стану.*

**Ключові слова:** стресостійкість, волонтери, воєнний стан, копінг-стратегії, довіра, психологічне благополуччя.

*The article presents the results of a theoretical and empirical study of the psychological features of stress resistance in volunteers during martial law. It reveals the essence of stress resistance as an integrative personality trait that ensures an individual's ability to function effectively, maintain emotional balance, and adapt to the influence of stressors. It is emphasized that volunteer activity in modern conditions is accompanied by significant psycho-emotional stress, the need for quick decision-making, and constant interaction with people in crisis situations, which increases the risk of emotional exhaustion. Stress resistance is defined as a leading factor in the psychological well-being of volunteers, closely related to cognitive flexibility, emotional self-regulation, self-confidence, social support, and the ability to positively reinterpret difficult life circumstances. Scientific approaches to understanding the phenomenon of stress resistance are summarized, and the results of an empirical analysis of its structural components and levels of expression among volunteers involved in humanitarian activities during martial law are presented. It*

has been established that most of the subjects are characterized by an average level of stress resistance, which indicates sufficient potential for adaptation to stressful socio-psychological conditions. A positive correlation was found between stress resistance indicators, coping strategies such as “focusing on emotions and their active expression” and “use of sedatives,” and the level of trust in the world. Correlation analysis revealed a certain inconsistency in coping mechanisms: along with constructive ways of overcoming stress, some volunteers use maladaptive strategies of emotional regulation, which indicates a need to develop psychological self-control skills. The positive relationship between stress resistance and trust in the world shows that an optimistic perception of social reality acts as an internal psychological resource that increases personal adaptability and reduces anxiety. Such trust contributes to the formation of confidence, internal stability, and resistance to crisis factors. The results obtained emphasize the need to organize systematic psychological support for volunteers, focused on the formation of emotional self-regulation skills, the development of self-confidence, and the enhancement of psychological resilience. The formation of stress resistance is seen as a multidimensional process that integrates cognitive, emotional, and behavioral components and ensures the preservation of psychological health and the effectiveness of volunteers during martial law.

**Keywords:** stress resistance, volunteers, martial law, coping strategies, trust, psychological well-being.

**Introduction.** Stress resistance is an important personal characteristic that reflects an individual's ability to maintain effectiveness and psycho-emotional balance in conditions of intense stress, uncertainty, and increased emotional pressure. During martial law, volunteers are often on the front lines of humanitarian efforts, where they face high levels of stress, psychological exhaustion, and the risk of emotional burnout. Scientists emphasize that the development of stress resistance contributes to the preservation of psychological health, increases the ability to adapt, self-regulate, and interact productively with other people. According to recent studies, in particular by A. Lushchyk, S. Melnychenko, S. Ozharyvska, O. Savychenko, N. Slobodyanik, E. Shunevych, and others, stress resistance is an important component of volunteers' psychological health, along with flexibility, self-acceptance, and the ability to positively reframe difficult life situations. It is the level of stress resistance that determines the effectiveness of overcoming emotional tension, the ability to maintain a stable emotional state, and avoid manifestations of emotional burnout.

Psychological studies show that volunteers with high stress resistance demonstrate better adaptation to crisis conditions, use coping strategies more constructively (“planning,” “positive rethinking,” “active self-control”) and have higher indicators of psychological well-being. Stress resistance helps volunteers maintain inner balance, provides control over emotional reactions, reduces anxiety and fear of rejection, which is especially important during martial law, when mental resources are under constant pressure. The development of stress resistance is a complex and multidimensional process that encompasses cognitive, emotional, and behavioral aspects of personality. It is formed through awareness of one's own resources, maintenance of social connections, development of self-regulation skills, and use of effective coping strategies. In volunteer work, stress resistance is not only a means of maintaining psychological health, but also a guarantee of effective help to others, since a psychologically stable volunteer is able to convey a sense of security, support, and hope to people who need it.

Thus, stress resistance during martial law is a determining factor in maintaining the psychological health of volunteers, ensuring their ability to adapt to difficult circumstances, overcome emotional exhaustion, and maintain inner balance in situations of uncertainty.

**Theoretical foundations of research.** A volunteer is a person who consciously and selflessly participates in socially useful activities, guided by the principles of solidarity, humanism, and responsibility. The motivation for volunteering combines altruistic desires to help others, socially oriented motives for interaction and self-realization, as well as personal needs for communication, recognition, and development [2]. In this context, the study of the phenomenon of stress resistance is of particular importance, as it allows for a deeper understanding of the psychological mechanisms of maintaining inner balance and emotional well-being of people involved in volunteer activities. In conditions of constant tension, uncertainty, and high moral and psychological stress, stress resistance is a key factor in the effectiveness of volunteer activity, ensuring the ability of the individual to act productively, adapt to change, and maintain psychological health.

According to N. Slobodyanik, stress resistance is “a psychological resource of an individual in a situation of change, which determines a person's ability to effectively overcome difficulties without negative consequences for physical and mental health” [8, p. 91]. It is also an integrative property of the

individual that ensures effective functioning in conditions of psychotraumatic factors without significant disturbances of emotional balance, traditionally considered as a system of cognitive, emotional-volitional, and behavioral mechanisms that allow a person to mobilize resources to overcome stress when necessary. The author points out that in most scientific approaches, stress resistance is interpreted as an integral part of the process of personality adaptation, which determines its relationship with emotional stability and the ability to self-regulate emotions. At the socio-psychological level, stress resistance manifests itself in the preservation of social adaptation potential, the maintenance of constructive interpersonal relationships, the realization of life goals, and self-actualization. A key indicator of this phenomenon is the ability of a person to effectively adapt to complex, changing, and stressful environmental conditions.

Research by O. Savichenko and colleagues emphasizes that stress resistance is formed through the interaction of three systems: cognitive, emotional-volitional, and motivational. A high level of stress resistance is associated with flexibility of thinking, the ability to reflect, and an optimistic acceptance of difficulties. For volunteers, this means the ability to understand the meaning of their activities, maintain internal motivation, help others, and not lose faith in their abilities even in situations of emotional exhaustion [7]. It has been established that high levels of psychological well-being among volunteers are determined by established stress management skills, the ability to regulate emotions, and post-traumatic growth [9]. Volunteers who provide support to the military are characterized by a developed range of emotional regulation strategies, but prolonged exposure to stressors leads to gradual emotional exhaustion. Volunteers who support the civilian population typically experience symptoms of depression and sleep disorders, but their adaptive resources are manifested in a rethinking of life priorities and the discovery of new opportunities for self-realization. Summarizing the results, it was found that the mental well-being of volunteers directly correlates with the development of personal and social resources that ensure effective coping with stressful situations.

The work of L. Kolomiets, G. Shulga, and I. Lebed focuses on the correlation between self-confidence and stress resistance. Self-confidence acts as a kind of buffer that ensures a harmonious combination of rational assessment of the situation with emotional stability. The authors emphasize that low self-confidence is accompanied by insecurity, inadequate self-esteem, and communication difficulties, which obviously reduces the overall ability of the individual to respond adequately. On the other hand, a high level of self-confidence, self-assurance, and self-acceptance contributes to maintaining psychological well-being and life satisfaction even in crisis situations, such as martial law. The authors state that individuals “who experience psychological well-being, are responsible, focused on their own strengths, take responsibility for successes and failures, are focused on achievement and self-realization have a higher level of interpersonal trust” [3, p. 11]. Interpersonal trust is an important psychological resource for volunteers, as it supports stress resistance, promotes effective teamwork, mutual support, and the ability to maintain emotional balance in conditions of high tension and uncertainty.

Stress resistance is not an innate characteristic—it is formed in the process of personal development through the understanding of one's own emotions. Developed stress resistance allows volunteers to maintain emotional balance, reduce anxiety and fear of rejection, and promotes the development of self-determination—the ability to act consciously, purposefully, and autonomously. The ability to regulate one's emotional reactions will contribute to the long-term performance of volunteer activities without negatively affecting mental health and well-being, increase the effectiveness of assistance, and contribute to maintaining emotional stability and sustained motivation for further activity [4].

In this context, the study of the phenomenon of stress resistance is of particular importance, as it allows for a deeper understanding of the psychological mechanisms of maintaining inner balance and emotional well-being of people involved in volunteer activities. In conditions of constant tension, uncertainty, and high moral and psychological stress, stress resistance is a key factor in the effectiveness of volunteer activity, ensuring the ability of the individual to act productively, adapt to change, and maintain psychological health.

According to N. Slobodyanik, stress resistance is “a psychological resource of an individual in a situation of change, which determines a person's ability to effectively overcome difficulties without negative consequences for physical and mental health” [8, p. 91]. It is also an integrative property of the individual that ensures effective functioning in conditions of psychotraumatic factors without significant disturbances of emotional balance, traditionally considered as a system of cognitive, emotional-volitional, and behavioral mechanisms that allow a person to mobilize resources to overcome stress when necessary. The author points out that in most scientific approaches, stress resistance is interpreted as an integral part of the process of personality adaptation, which determines its relationship with emotional stability and the ability to self-regulate emotions. At the socio-psychological level, stress resistance manifests itself in the

preservation of social adaptation potential, the maintenance of constructive interpersonal relationships, the realization of life goals, and self-actualization. A key indicator of this phenomenon is the ability of a person to effectively adapt to complex, changing, and stressful environmental conditions.

**The purpose of the article** is to determine the characteristics of stress resistance in volunteers during martial law.

**Methods.** To determine the characteristics of stress resistance in volunteers during martial law, an empirical study was conducted using the following psychodiagnostic methods: “Stress Resistance” by S. Maksimenko, L. Karamushka, T. Zaychikova to assess the level of individual stress resistance of volunteers, the characteristics of their emotional stability, tolerance to frustration, and ability to mobilize resources in stressful situations [5, pp. 15-16]; method for diagnosing coping strategies (SOPE) by C. Carver, M. Scheier, and D. Weintraub to determine the frequency of use of constructive or destructive strategies [1, pp. 180-184]; methodology of trust/distrust of the world, other people, and oneself by A. Kuprichenko, adapted by O. Savchenko, which allows identifying and verifying the relationship between the level of self-confidence and the ability of volunteers to maintain balance in stressful situations [6]. Empirical indicators were processed using the SPSS ver. 16.0 statistical software package.

**Sample.** The sample of the empirical study consisted of individuals involved in volunteer activities, of whom 70% were women and 30% were men. The average age of the sample was 27.6 years, and the average length of volunteer activity was 2.6 years.

**Results and discussion.** The analysis of the results of the ability to maintain emotional balance and productivity of volunteers is presented in Table 1.

*Table 1.*

**Primary statistics of indicators according to the “Stress Resistance” methodology, S. Maksimenko et al.**

Indicator	M	Me	SD	SE	Min	Max
Stress resistance	33,8	35	3,62	0,694	28	45

*Notes: M – mean value; Med – median; Mo – mode; SD – standard deviation; SE – standard error; Min – minimum value, Max – maximum value.*

According to the results of descriptive statistics, the “stress resistance” indicator is characterized by a predominance of the average level of severity, which indicates the sufficient ability of respondents to effectively cope with stressful situations and maintain adaptive behavior under stress. Quantitative analysis of the obtained indicators allowed us to identify three levels of stress resistance among volunteers. The largest number of volunteers – 83% – fell into the average level, indicating their ability to maintain psycho-emotional balance and productivity under conditions of short-term exposure to stress factors. We assume that prolonged or excessive stress can lead to decreased performance, mood swings, and difficulties in performing tasks. Fourteen percent of the subjects were classified as having a high level of stress resistance. They have developed skills of self-regulation, confidence, adaptability, and the ability to mobilize resources to overcome difficulties. A low level of stress resistance was identified in 3% of volunteers, indicating reduced emotional control, a tendency to anxiety, emotional instability, and avoidance of difficult situations in volunteer work.

The descriptive statistics of coping behavior are presented in Table 2.

*Table 2.*

**Primary Statistical Indicators According to the “COPE” Method by C. Carver et al.**

Indicator	M	Me	SD	SE	Min	Max
Positive Reinterpretation	14,65	15,5	1,82	0,353	9	16
Mental Disengagement	10,4	10	2,43	0,479	6	14
Focus on and Venting of Emotions	10,4	11	1,81	0,356	5	16
Use of Instrumental Social Support	12,2	12	2,47	0,472	7	16
Active Coping	13,6	14	1,78	0,344	10	16
Denial	8,6	9	2,61	0,514	4	15
Turning to Religion	9,3	9	4,58	0,92	4	16
Humor	13	12	2,49	0,489	6	16

Behavioral Disengagement	10	10,5	2,22	0,366	5	13
Restraint Coping	12,2	12,5	2,015	0,383	7	16
Use of Emotional Social Support	10,6	10,5	3,04	0,598	4	16
Substance Use	7,6	6,5	2,725	0,496	4	16
Acceptance	13	13	2,185	0,435	8	16
Suppression of Competing Activities	13	13	1,71	0,324	8	16
Planning	13,5	13,5	1,845	0,345	8	16

Summarizing the results of descriptive statistics, it can be noted that the sample of volunteers demonstrates a relative homogeneity in the use of most coping strategies, indicating the formation of similar ways of responding to stressful situations. At the same time, certain differences are observed in the scales related to the emotional sphere and the ways of seeking support, which may suggest varying approaches to managing tension and alleviating emotional strain. The general tendency indicates a balanced use of both emotion-focused and behavior-oriented coping strategies, which ensures an adequate level of adaptability among volunteers under stressful conditions.

A qualitative analysis of the obtained indicators shows that the most frequently used strategy is “Positive Reinterpretation and Growth” ( $M = 14.65$ ), which indicates a well-developed ability for self-regulation and self-actualization, readiness to accept professional challenges, and the capacity to constructively reframe stressful situations—perceiving difficulties as opportunities for personal growth and the development of new skills. The strategies “Planning” ( $M = 13.5$ ) and “Active Coping” ( $M = 13.6$ ) are also often employed by the respondents, suggesting responsibility, the ability to quickly orient themselves in a situation, make decisions, and act under uncertainty. These strategies promote effective organization of activities, coordination of team actions, and maintenance of collective motivation. They help volunteers rationally allocate time and resources, reduce the impact of stress factors, and maintain confidence and psychological balance.

Next in frequency are the coping strategies “Humor” ( $M = 13$ ), “Suppression of Competing Activities” ( $M = 13$ ), and “Acceptance” ( $M = 13$ ), which enable respondents to maintain a positive attitude, reduce tension, and foster an optimistic outlook on their experiences; they help focus on priority tasks, enhance performance, and decrease stress levels; they also ensure adaptation to unpredictable circumstances, assist in focusing on controllable aspects of the situation, and promote inner equilibrium. Awareness and flexibility in responding to stressful events strengthen psychological resilience and contribute to the emotional well-being of volunteers.

Less frequently used strategies include “Instrumental Social Support” ( $M = 12.2$ ), “Restraint” ( $M = 12.2$ ), “Emotional Social Support” ( $M = 10.6$ ), and “Focus on and Venting of Emotions” ( $M = 10.4$ ). This suggests a prevailing tendency toward independent problem-solving and avoidance of external support, which may lead to overload, emotional exhaustion, and an increased risk of professional burnout. The least used strategies are “Mental Disengagement” ( $M = 10.4$ ), “Behavioral Disengagement” ( $M = 10$ ), “Turning to Religion” ( $M = 9.3$ ), “Denial” ( $M = 8.6$ ), and “Substance Use” ( $M = 7.6$ ). These strategies are generally considered ineffective, and their infrequent use indicates the respondents’ orientation toward constructive ways of coping with stress.

The results of the coping strategy analysis demonstrate that volunteers predominantly employ constructive stress-coping strategies, reflecting their organization, goal orientation, responsibility, and capacity for self-control. Such behavior indicates an optimistic perception of difficulties and the ability to rationally structure their activities for effective problem-solving. In the course of volunteer work, emotional self-regulation and the ability to be aware of and express one’s emotions play an important role. Experience in volunteer initiatives influences the ways of seeking support and the tendency toward a more conscious, organized approach to task performance. The obtained results indicate the maturity of personal resources and the ability to adapt under stressful conditions.

The descriptive statistical indicators of the participants’ trust are presented in Table 3.

**Primary statistical indicators according to A. Kupreichenko’s method of trust/distrust of personality toward the world, others, and oneself**

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>Me</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>SE</b>	<b>Min</b>	<b>Max</b>
Trust toward the World	10,1	10	1,86	0,356	5	14
Trust in Other People	9,8	9,5	1,89	0,373	5	13
Self-Trust	14,6	12,5	5,17	0,984	6	26

The analysis of the obtained results indicates differences in the levels of manifestation of this phenomenon. In particular, regarding the indicator “*trust in the world*,” a tendency toward an average level is observed; for “*trust in other people*,” a tendency toward a high level is evident; whereas “*trust in oneself*” is characterized by lower values compared to the other aspects. These results reflect a general variability in the structure of trust and indicate that volunteers are generally inclined toward a positive perception of their social environment, while at the same time demonstrating a certain lack of confidence in their own abilities and potential.

Quantitative analysis of the scales reveals that an average level prevails for “*trust in the world*” in 69.5% of respondents, which contributes to a realistic perception of events and balanced decision-making in volunteer activities. A portion of participants (23.7%) with a low level of trust demonstrate increased caution, anxiety, and a tendency toward pessimism, which reduces their activity and effectiveness. Only 6.8% of respondents show a distinctly positive attitude toward the world, openness, and psychological resilience.

For the parameter “*trust in other people*,” a high level prevails among 69.5% of individuals, which indicates the sample’s orientation toward social interaction, positive attitudes toward others, and readiness for cooperation, mutual support, and the establishment of constructive interpersonal relationships. In contrast, regarding “*trust in oneself*,” a low level predominates in 79.7% of volunteers. This reflects a tendency toward self-doubt, insecurity about personal competence, fear of making mistakes or not meeting others’ expectations, a tendency to underestimate one’s achievements, heightened self-criticism in failure situations, dependence on external approval, increased anxiety, and unstable self-confidence.

The next stage of the study involved identifying the features of volunteers’ stress resistance during martial law. To achieve this, a correlation analysis was conducted using Spearman’s correlation coefficient. The results indicate statistically significant correlations between the level of stress resistance and certain coping strategies employed by volunteers when managing stressful situations.

In particular, a positive correlation was found between the “*level of stress resistance*” and the coping strategies “*focus on and venting of emotions*” ( $r = 0.506$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) and “*substance use*” ( $r = 0.380$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). Volunteers are capable of recognizing and openly expressing their emotions, which serves as a means of emotional release and tension reduction. Such behavior helps maintain inner balance, decreases internal strain, and prevents the accumulation of negative experiences. However, some volunteers tend to alleviate emotional tension through external, not always constructive, means of state regulation—using certain “calming” substances for temporary relief. This strategy is compensatory in nature but does not support long-term adaptation, as it merely masks emotional difficulties without addressing their causes.

A positive correlation was also identified between “*stress resistance level*” and “*trust in the world*” ( $r = 0.380$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ), which holds important psychological significance for understanding the internal resources of volunteers during martial law. A higher level of stress resistance is associated with a stronger capacity to trust the surrounding world and perceive it as relatively safe and predictable. Such volunteers tend to evaluate events more optimistically, adapt more easily to changes, and maintain emotional stability even in complex or crisis situations. It can be assumed that trust in the world functions as an internal psychological resource that supports stress resistance. A positive perception of reality lowers anxiety levels, facilitates better control of emotional reactions, and promotes effective coping with life’s difficulties.

Thus, the results of the correlation analysis indicate that volunteers with higher levels of stress resistance tend to engage both in constructive emotional self-expression and in quick methods of tension reduction, reflecting the ambivalent nature of their coping mechanisms. A positive worldview strengthens their ability to withstand stress, while developed stress resistance fosters the formation of a stable and secure attitude toward the world.

The findings emphasize the need for psychological support and the development of constructive self-regulation skills that allow individuals to effectively cope with stress without resorting to potentially harmful strategies.

**Conclusions.** Stress resistance is a key factor in maintaining the psychological health and effective functioning of volunteers during martial law. It determines the individual's ability to preserve inner balance, emotional stability, and productivity under conditions of high workload, uncertainty, and continuous exposure to stressors. The results of the empirical study demonstrated that most volunteers exhibit an average level of stress resistance, which ensures adaptive behavior in short-term stressful situations.

A high level of stress resistance is associated with well-developed self-regulation skills, cognitive flexibility, an optimistic perception of difficulties, and readiness to mobilize resources to overcome tension. Volunteers who demonstrate high stress resistance more frequently use constructive coping strategies such as “*positive reinterpretation*,” “*planning*,” and “*active coping*,” which facilitate effective problem-solving, maintain psychological well-being, and prevent emotional burnout.

At the same time, the revealed correlations point to the ambivalence of coping mechanisms: some volunteers, alongside constructive strategies, resort to maladaptive forms of state regulation, such as the use of “*calming*” substances, indicating a need for developing emotional self-regulation skills. The positive relationship between stress resistance and trust in the world suggests that a positive perception of reality serves as an internal psychological resource that supports adaptability and reduces anxiety. Such trust promotes the formation of an optimistic attitude toward events, sustaining confidence and resilience in crisis conditions.

Therefore, stress resistance among volunteers during martial law represents a complex characteristic that integrates cognitive, emotional, and behavioral aspects of personality. It ensures the ability to adapt to extreme circumstances, control emotional reactions, maintain constructive social relationships, and effectively provide assistance to others.

**Perspective for Further Research.** Future research should focus on studying the dynamics of volunteers' stress resistance in prolonged crisis situations; analyzing gender, age, and professional differences in coping strategies; and exploring the relationship between stress resistance and other components of psychological health—such as emotional intelligence, reflexivity, self-trust, and social support. The development of these directions will deepen the understanding of psychological mechanisms of volunteer adaptation and contribute to enhancing the effectiveness of their activities under martial law conditions.

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## **FEATURES OF THE ACTIVITIES OF SOCIAL SERVICES SPECIALISTS IN UKRAINE UNDER MODERN CHALLENGES**

У статті висвітлюються особливості роботи соціальних працівників у сучасних нестабільних і критичних умовах. Згідно з отриманими даними, соціальні служби в даний час безпосередньо залучені до практичного застосування соціальної роботи та надання соціальних послуг різним особам, які зіткнулися зі складними життєвими обставинами або є членами груп, що мають високий ризик їх пережити. Основна увага приділяється векторам розвитку соціальних служб в умовах військового стану, які включають надання високоякісної соціально-психологічної та інших видів допомоги, своєчасне, професійне та цілеспрямоване реагування на запити громадян, а також підтримання етично збалансованого та плідного спілкування з клієнтами, їхніми законними представниками та громадою. Слід зазначити, що Україна розробила і наразі використовує систему соціальних послуг державної, муніципальної та недержавної форм власності та спеціальних служб, яка дозволяє надавати необхідні послуги більшій кількості отримувачів, які страждають від негативних наслідків поточної ситуації. Зазначається, що мережева організація діяльності соціальних служб різних форм власності та підпорядкування покращила доступність соціальних послуг та соціальної допомоги за місцем проживання або фактичного перебування різних категорій осіб та сімей, які опинилися у складних життєвих обставинах. Зазначається, що соціальні послуги надаються відповідно до державних стандартів, які встановлюють параметри моніторингу та оцінки якості наданих соціальних послуг, а також рамки професійної співпраці між надавачами соціальних послуг та їх отримувачами. Підкреслюється, що вибір стратегій соціальної роботи в нинішніх нестабільних і критичних умовах та ефективне надання соціальних послуг вимагають висококваліфікованих фахівців і застосування науково обґрунтованих та ефективних методів соціальної роботи, щоб надати належну підтримку людям, які опинилися в складних життєвих ситуаціях, активізувати їхні соціальні та особисті ресурси та інтегрувати їх у суспільство. Доведено, що сьогодні соціальні працівники стикаються з широким спектром складних проблем, які вимагають не тільки їх професійних знань, а й працездатності, енергійності, емоційної врівноваженості, а також здатності до самоконтролю та самоаналізу. Успіх взаємодії з отримувачами послуг визначається особистими та професійними якостями соціальних працівників, які враховують індивідуальні потреби та особливості кожної людини. Соціальні працівники, які демонструють високий рівень професіоналізму та самоорганізації, краще здатні запобігати негативним наслідкам кризових ситуацій. Було встановлено, що однією з найважливіших передумов ефективного функціонування соціальних послуг у сучасну епоху є забезпечення високоякісної діагностики, яка допомагає визначити першопричини проблем клієнтів, оцінити їхні поточні обставини, оцінити наслідки складних життєвих обставин та визначити ресурси, які допоможуть їм подолати ці виклики. Окрім клієнтів та отримувачів соціальних послуг, соціальні працівники, менеджери, партнерські організації, науковці та суспільство в цілому можуть отримати користь від цієї технології соціальної роботи, за умови проведення високоякісної діагностики та оцінки потреб.

Ключові слова: виклики сьогодення, критичні ситуації, підвищення ефективності роботи фахівців соціальних служб, соціальні послуги, соціальні служби, умови нестабільності, соціальна робота в кризових ситуаціях.

The article outlines the characteristics of social workers' work in today's unstable and critical environments. According to the findings, social services are currently directly involved in the practical application of social work and the provision of social services to a variety of individuals who have encountered challenging life circumstances or who are members of groups that are at a high risk of

experiencing them. The focus is on the social services' direction vectors under military conditions, which include providing high-quality socio-psychological and other forms of assistance, responding to citizens' requests in a timely, professional, and targeted manner, and maintaining ethically balanced and fruitful communication with clients, their legal representatives, and the community. It should be mentioned that Ukraine has developed and is currently operating a system of social services of state, municipal, and non-state forms of ownership and special services that enables the process of delivering requested services to a greater number of recipients from among those who are suffering from the negative effects of the current situation. It is stated that the network organisation of social service activities of different ownership and subordination forms has improved the accessibility of social services and social assistance at the place of residence or actual stay of different categories of people and families who have encountered challenging life circumstances. It is stated that social services are rendered in compliance with state standards that establish the parameters for monitoring and evaluating the calibre of social services rendered as well as the framework of professional collaboration between social service providers and recipients. It is emphasised that social services' selection of social work strategies in the current unstable and critical conditions and the efficient delivery of social services necessitate highly qualified professionals and the application of social work techniques that are both scientifically sound and effective in order to provide appropriate support for people in challenging life situations, activate their social and personal resources, and integrate them into the community. It has been shown that social workers nowadays encounter a wide range of difficult problems that call for not only their professional expertise but also their capacity for work, drive, emotional equilibrium, and the capacity for self-control and introspection. The success of interactions with service receivers is determined by the personal and professional attributes of social service providers, taking into consideration each person's unique needs and traits. Social workers who exhibit a high degree of professionalism and self-organization are better able to prevent the negative effects of crisis circumstances. It has been found that one of the most important prerequisites for social services to function effectively in the modern era is the provision of high-quality diagnostics, which aid in determining the root causes of clients' issues, evaluating their current circumstances, assessing the effects of challenging life circumstances, and identifying resources to help them get through these challenges. In addition to clients and recipients of social services, social workers, managers, partner organisations, scientists, and the society at large can all benefit from this technology of social work as long as high-quality diagnostics and needs assessments are conducted.

**Keywords:** challenges of the present day, critical situations, increasing the efficiency of social service professionals, social services, social services, conditions of instability, social work in crisis situations.

**Introduction.** The procedures of developing and executing social policies as well as designing Ukraine's social protection system are impacted by contemporary living changes and difficulties. The activities of social services, among other areas of social assistance for the Ukrainian populace, underwent modifications throughout the war [1, p. 8; 2, p. 90]. In times of contemporary instability, social service operations necessitate utmost focus, greater adaptability and flexibility, improved coordination with other structures, active participation, and utilisation of the community's potential. In Ukraine, practical social work is focused, offers socio-psychological support, and offers a range of aid to anyone who has asked for assistance. In challenging situations, social services can offer highly skilled and timely support [5, p. 4]. The current focus in the professional direction of social services is on preventing the potential negative impact of an uncertain situation on citizens' quality of life; actively informing the public about social services that are available, their rights, and how to get socio-psychological assistance in emergency situations; promptly diagnosing and responding to changes in the urgent needs of different population and societal categories; developing adaptable algorithms of interaction and forming close partnerships with other public, state, and international organisations to strengthen the comprehensive nature of providing socio-psychological assistance; utilising the potential of remote social work techniques and online platforms to improve the accessibility and continuity of social service delivery; guaranteeing social workers' professional growth for disaster scenarios.

As a result, we think it is appropriate for this publication's structure to highlight and describe the characteristics of social care professionals' work in Ukraine during this time of contemporary instability.

**Theoretical foundations of research.** In Ukraine, social services are provided by non-governmental groups, state and local authorities, and individuals in challenging situations. Since the Ukrainian state gained its independence, social services have taken on a major role in carrying out social policy in practice, providing social services to different segments of the population, and especially helping citizens who have encountered challenging situations in their lives [10, p. 149].

The Constitution of Ukraine (1996), the laws of Ukraine "On bodies and services for children and special institutions for children" (1995), "On state social standards and state social guarantees" (2000), "On social services" (2019), "On social work with families, children, and youth" (2001), "On childhood protection" (2001), and other laws govern the activities of social services in Ukraine in the modern era. The European Charter of Fundamental Social Rights (revised) (1996), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (European Convention on Human Rights) (1950), and other international agreements serve as the foundation for social services operations in Ukraine today. Given the main tenets of national and international law, among other topics, the primary responsibilities of social services today are to provide social guarantees to citizens in line with the main tenets of state social policy, conduct practical social work, provide social services to different groups of people who have encountered challenging situations in their lives, etc.

Domestic scientists have defined social services and their system in Ukraine as follows:

- a collection of interrelated and interacting entities that, in the "morphological dimension, create an original structure that, during its functioning, directs its energy to achieve a common goal – the creation and reproduction of the essential human forces" [11, p. 7];

- a collection of administrative bodies, structures, and specialised institutions, both state and non-state, that perform social work to serve the populace and provide social assistance and services in order to overcome or mitigate a difficult situation [11, p. 11];

- all entities that provide social services (enterprises, institutions, organisations, and institutions regardless of the form of ownership and management, as well as individual entrepreneurs who provide social services) [4, p. 5], etc.

Let's outline the salient features of social services that, given the focus of our book, dictate the aims, objectives, paths, and kinds of actions of their professionals in contemporary times. First off, according to the way they operate, social services are an organisational type of social work. Their professionals work practically with different groups of people, offering social, psychological (including diagnostic) and other services, as well as information, legal, and consulting. They also attend to the skill development of all staff members. Second, social services operate in a professional manner, which is guaranteed by the degree of education attained by their staff members and their ongoing development of competence, taking into consideration constituent documents, state standards for social service delivery, etc. Thirdly, social service activities are dictated by their mission in light of the clientele they serve and the founder's policy (e.g., individuals with disabilities; military personnel and their families; victims of human trafficking or violence; the elderly; internally displaced persons; children left without care; etc.). Fourth, a system of social services has been established and is in operation in Ukraine. It combines state, municipal, and non-state social services, as well as special institutions and establishments that are either under the control of social services or with which pertinent cooperation agreements have been signed. This enables the provision of services that are requested by a greater number of recipients and covers social attention. Fifth, guidelines have been established for the network operation of social services in situations of territorial location or departmental subordination, which improves accessibility to social services and help at the residence. Sixthly, a differentiated system of financing social services has been built at the expense of state and local budgets, special funds and projects (including foreign ones), funds of sponsors and charitable assistance, payment of the cost of services by their recipients and other sources not prohibited by current legislation.

Thus, social services – that is, deliberate, planned, and structured actions by authorised social service specialists aimed at preventing difficult life circumstances, overcoming such circumstances or minimising their negative consequences for individuals/families, and implementing attempts to prevent those who belong to vulnerable groups from falling into such circumstances – are the primary means of implementing social work in Ukraine, as was previously mentioned. The quality of life, health, and personal growth prospects, as well as the family's ability to function, are all adversely affected by challenging living situations. Furthermore, one cannot overcome such challenging life conditions on one's own [7]. State standards that establish the principles of organisation, planning, principles, content, grounds, and termination of provision, the criteria and procedure for providers to evaluate the needs of the service recipient, information on the required resources, personnel, methodological support, the procedure for subject interaction, etc., are followed when providing social services.

The following factors influence the social services' choice of strategies in the face of contemporary uncertainty: an awareness of the core principles, values, and essence of social work for the potential to achieve positive dynamics in an individual's, group's, or community's life; a focus on using innovative theories and models to improve the potential for development and well-being of recipients; the necessity of considering the interests, capabilities, and other individual characteristics of clients in order to rely on their

resources as well as those of the immediate environment and the community; the necessity of stepping up the recipient's efforts to improve resilience, independence, and community integration, etc.; orientation towards enhancing the accountability and capacity of recipients to make significant decisions regarding not only their own lives but also their participation in group decision-making and action to enhance community well-being; dependence on the application of social work technologies that are grounded in science and have demonstrated efficacy of the techniques employed.

It's also important to note that the principles of humanity and tolerance, confidentiality, targeting and ensuring an individual approach, legality, accessibility, and openness, social justice, voluntary choice to receive or refuse social services (or a portion of them), comprehensiveness, maximum efficiency of budget funds by providers, compliance with quality standards for the provision of social services, responsibility for adhering to ethical norms, teamwork to achieve efficiency and high quality of services provided, etc., are the foundation upon which social service specialists perform their professional activities in a variety of fields and types of work in today's environment. Respect for the dignity of citizens, prioritising the interests of each individual, tolerance, trust and interaction in the process of solving client problems, accessibility of services, and other principles are clearly defined as priority principles in the approved "Code of Ethics for Social Work Specialists in Ukraine" that takes into account international ethical principles and standards of social work [6].

As part of social work, communication guarantees that professionals engage with clients and plans their collaboration based on humanistic principles, individuality, compassion, tolerance, and mercy, among other things. In addition to a high degree of professional skill and culture, social services professionals today must also possess the ability to work, motivation, emotional balance, self-control, self-regulation, and self-reflection. This is because the professional challenges they face are diverse and complex. Social service professionals' personal and professional attributes guarantee that interactions with social service recipients are effectively differentiated, taking into consideration their social, psychological, and physiological characteristics; their need for social services; and complex life circumstances that disrupt vital activity and lower quality of life. Persistent indications of the damaging experience of crisis states are prevented by the high degree of professionalism, mobilisation, and self-organization of social service professionals [8, p. 21]. In fact, in this regard, social workers' mental health and a high enough degree of their professional self-efficacy will also help to protect clients' rights, liberties, and legitimate interests in a variety of challenging life circumstances that Ukrainians are currently dealing with during the war [9, p. 6-7]. We are discussing effective professional support for different types of clients in accomplishing life goals, overcoming obstacles, and enhancing an individual's overall social functioning. We concur that social services are social institutions that can effectively work with the client to design a new functional system that will give him access to new resources, improve his capacity for adaptation, improve his relationships with other formal and informal social systems, and create new social support networks that may contribute to social advancement [1, p. 74].

The communication method that social care providers use with different types of customers is impacted by the difficulties of the times. No matter who they work with – a community, a group, or an individual – social service providers are constantly engaged in a particular living circumstance, attempting to comprehend it and, based on that understanding, devising solutions [3, p. 21]. In actuality, social work falls under the category of "helping" professions, which are characterised by the close daily interactions that social workers have with clients, social service recipients, and in some cases, their friends, neighbours, and family members in order to fully understand life's realities and risks. In order to maintain a high level of professional attention, empathy, understanding, and correctness in contact with clients and colleagues while performing various functions, social service professionals must develop certain personally and professionally significant qualities. These qualities include an understanding of the objective circumstances and challenges of the time, as well as the complexity of the psycho-emotional states of people who are in difficult life and crisis situations [1, p. 126].

The analysis of scientific and other sources allows us to summarize some features of the activities of social services in modern unstable and crisis conditions and present them in Fig. 1.

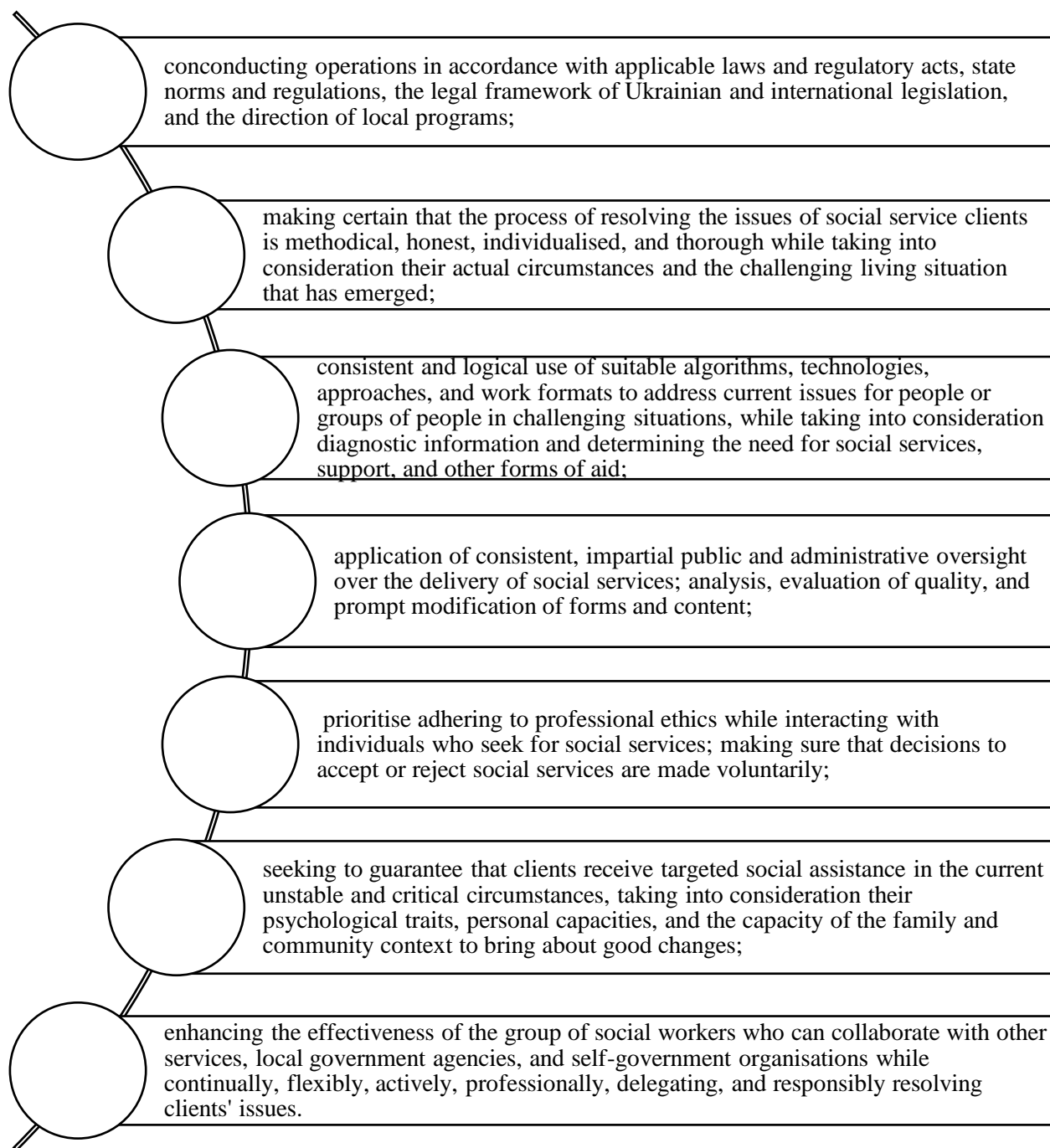


Fig. 1. Some features of the activities of social services in modern unstable conditions.

Conducting qualitative diagnostics is regarded as one of the prerequisites for improving the effectiveness of the social services delivery process by professionals and services in contemporary conditions, which will impact the likelihood of resolving current issues for people and families who have encountered challenging life circumstances. In order to continue providing high-quality social services, socio-psychological support, and other forms of assistance, social service specialists use diagnostics in their work to determine the causes of social and other issues that their clients face, as well as to determine their life circumstances and the effects of challenging life circumstances. Social service professionals can create the most effective system of professional interaction with people and families in challenging life circumstances by gathering and analysing important information, analysing conditions and causes, taking

into account the influence of environmental factors, etc. They can also create an individual plan for the provision of social services, involve qualified social service providers, make necessary adjustments to the entire process, and keep an eye on the quantity and calibre of professional efforts that are being carried out.

In order to ensure quality, targeting, and an individualised approach for each individual or group of individuals who have encountered challenging life circumstances or are at risk of experiencing them, diagnostics is a crucial component of social work and the process by which social service specialists provide social services. The difficulty of identifying, through scientific methods and specially designed tools, the subject of diagnosis itself – indicators of well-being or unwell-being (psychological, social, professional, spiritual, financial, physical, etc.) of an individual and/or group of individuals—as well as the features of life and social interaction and their determinants – is a characteristic feature of diagnostics in the structure of the activities of social service specialists in modern conditions. Effective diagnostics and needs assessment can make it a useful tool for social work in the modern world, focussing on social workers, clients, and people who receive social services and assistance, as well as managers, staff members of partner organisations, scientists, and other individuals.

In the framework of social service professionals' work, the diagnostic process starts each time an initiative appeal is made by a person who has encountered challenging situations in life or by his legal agent. A social service professional evaluates the circumstances and requirements of the possible recipient after receiving an appeal about the possibility of getting social services. This is done in order to investigate the needs, the reciprocal influences between the potential recipient and his surroundings, etc. [4, p. 55]. The social status of an individual or family experiencing challenging life circumstances, the way in which clients interact with their surroundings and social institutions, and the resources required and accessible for social functioning and daily activities are also significant diagnostic indicators.

Diagnostics of the clients' current psycho-emotional state and other mental characteristics can be performed while they are receiving individual services. Diagnostics are especially important in crisis intervention settings, which are marked by feelings of helplessness, despair, and difficulty making decisions and coping with a challenging and/or crisis situation. Supportive professional relationships, addressing the client's feelings, and lowering emotional stress are even more crucial in these situations, especially for those who have gone through traumatic experiences, are grieving, have been socially isolated, have faced discrimination, etc. Focussing on the client's strengths, hopes, and expectations; focussing professional interactions on enhancing the client's capacity to overcome life's challenges, personal growth, and reaching the desired level of well-being; and encouraging the active partnership position of the social work client in the process of direct interaction and constructive cooperation are all important aspects of social service professionals' work.

The information gathered during the diagnostic procedure also aids in the development of a system of connections between social care recipients, experts, and social services. It will help them develop new objectives pertaining to conquering challenging life situations, coming up with a specific action plan, and updating resources to fulfil responsibilities, especially through engagement with other community social institutions. We would want to highlight how crucial it is for social workers to comprehend and make use of community resources in order to bring about positive social changes both generally and for a person or group of people going through challenging times. As a result, we believe it is appropriate to update the "green" social work principles in the community to reflect current circumstances. This will enable communities to be mobilised to establish and accomplish tangible goals pertaining to enhancing living conditions and citizens' well-being in the unstable circumstances of the military presence. This allows us to discuss how social service clients can better solve problems, build relationships with others and public institutions, and become part of the community. Diagnostics and systematic monitoring will help achieve structural changes in social service activities and the implementation of social support within a particular administrative-territorial unit, in addition to meeting the needs of social service clients, mobilising them to expand their opportunities and defend their rights, boosting social capital, and bolstering community resilience. Even in the challenging and crisis-ridden conditions of the war era, which lead to a decline in the social and economic circumstances of citizens, the emergence of challenges in the social adaptation of internally displaced citizens, the expansion of the spectrum of psychosocial difficulties of individuals and families who have experienced trauma or loss, have health issues, etc., communities can increase their own potential for achieving positive changes through mechanisms for assessing needs, diagnostics, and monitoring.

**Conclusions.** In the current unstable environment, social services are playing an increasingly important role in maintaining the nation's human potential, guaranteeing social stability, social justice, and community viability, as well as in offering individuals and families in challenging life situations effective

socio-psychological support and assistance. Social services play a crucial role in bolstering social security during times of war, which serves as the foundation for post-crisis recovery and post-war reconstruction. They also carry out highly specific tasks in delivering social services and carrying out social work. In times of contemporary instability, social service professionals can effectively form a network of partner support for focused and operational responses to crisis situations through their interactions with local authorities, public organisations, volunteer groups, and socially engaged citizens.

**A perspective for further research.** In particular, we think that comparing the areas of social service work in nations that have experienced war and other traumatic events, studying and generalising the best domestic and international social work practices, and providing social services to different groups of people in challenging life and crisis situations, as well as the potential to expand the scope (technologically and otherwise) of social services and new models of social support while taking into account the experiences of other nations and national characteristics, etc., are all promising approaches to the problem that the article identifies.

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## FEATURES OF SOCIAL WORK WITH INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS

У статті розглянуто специфіку соціальної роботи з внутрішньо переміщеними особами (ВПО) в умовах збройного конфлікту. Актуальність теми зумовлена масштабністю внутрішнього переміщення населення внаслідок повномасштабної війни та необхідністю забезпечення ефективної підтримки ВПО на всіх етапах адаптації. Особливої уваги потребує розробка й впровадження комплексних підходів до соціальної роботи, що охоплюють не лише матеріальну допомогу, а й соціально-психологічну підтримку, зміцнення соціальних зв'язків і розвиток стресостійкості. У сучасних умовах надзвичайно важливо створювати інклюзивні моделі інтеграції ВПО, орієнтовані на довготривалу стабілізацію як окремих осіб, так і приймаючих громад. Теоретичний аналіз дозволив нам констатувати, що соціальна робота з ВПО в Україні реалізується у класичних формах (надання державних соціальних послуг і підтримки) та неklasичних, що включають психологічну реабілітацію, адаптацію й роботу з мікросередовищем. Ефективність цих форм залежить від поєднання індивідуального підходу до особи та впливу на її соціальне оточення. У результаті соціальної діагностики виявлено, що більшість ВПО перебувають у стані дезадаптації, що свідчить про труднощі в адаптації до нових умов життя. Незважаючи на це, зафіксовано наявність внутрішніх ресурсів: прийняття себе, внутрішній контроль, емоційна стабільність. У респондентів простежується позитивне ставлення до оточення, проте зберігається певна напруга у соціальній взаємодії. Переважання внутрішнього контролю над зовнішнім свідчить про готовність брати відповідальність за власні дії. Водночас емоційний комфорт у частини опитаних поєднується з високим рівнем психологічного стресу. Значна частка респондентів (48,4%) має високий рівень стресу, що підтверджує їхню вразливість до впливу травматичних подій. Адаптація у громадах відбувається повільно - понад 60% ВПО проживають на новому місці більше року, але все ще мають труднощі із працевлаштуванням і соціальною інтеграцією. Понад половина опитаних зіштовхуються з житловими та матеріальними проблемами. Лише третина респондентів має роботу, а більшість усе ще перебуває у пошуку. Психологічне напруження, пов'язане з переміщенням, зберігається у понад 59% опитаних. Незважаючи на формальну підтримку з боку громад, рівень суб'єктивного відчуття прийняття залишається низьким. Усе це вказує на необхідність комплексної підтримки ВПО, яка має включати психологічну допомогу, доступ до освіти, працевлаштування та соціальну інтеграцію.

**Ключові слова:** внутрішньо переміщені особи, адаптація, соціальна робота, інтеграція, напрямки соціальної роботи.

The article examines the specifics of social work with internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the context of armed conflict. The relevance of this topic stems from the massive scale of internal displacement caused by full-scale war and the need to provide effective support for IDPs at all stages of adaptation. Particular attention should be given to developing and implementing comprehensive approaches to social work that encompass not only material assistance but also psychosocial support, strengthening social ties, and fostering resilience. In current conditions, it is critically important to create inclusive models of IDP integration aimed at long-term stabilization for both individuals and receiving communities. Theoretical analysis has allowed us to conclude that social work with IDPs in Ukraine is implemented through both classical forms (provision of state social services and support) and non-classical forms, which include psychological rehabilitation, adaptation, and work with the micro-environment. The effectiveness of these

approaches depends on combining individualized support with interventions targeting the person's social surroundings. Social diagnostics revealed that most IDPs experience maladaptation, indicating difficulties in adjusting to new living conditions. Despite this, internal resources were identified, including self-acceptance, internal locus of control, and emotional stability. Respondents generally demonstrated positive attitudes toward their environment, though some tension in social interactions persists. The predominance of internal over external control suggests a readiness to take responsibility for one's actions. However, while some respondents reported emotional comfort, this coexisted with high levels of psychological stress. A significant proportion of respondents (48.4%) exhibited high stress levels, confirming their vulnerability to traumatic events. Adaptation within receiving communities progresses slowly - over 60% of IDPs have resided in their new location for more than a year yet still face employment challenges and social integration barriers. More than half of respondents struggle with housing and material difficulties. Only one-third have secured employment, while the majority remain job-seeking. Psychological strain related to displacement persists among 59% of respondents. Despite formal community support, the subjective sense of acceptance remains low. These findings underscore the necessity for comprehensive IDP support programs that incorporate psychological assistance, access to education, employment opportunities, and social integration measures.

**Keywords:** *internally displaced persons, adaptation, social work, integration, directions of social work.*

**Introduction.** Internally displaced persons (IDPs) represent one of the most vulnerable population groups in Ukraine, requiring comprehensive support from both the state and local communities. The full-scale war has forced thousands to abandon their homes and seek refuge in other regions of the country. Their adaptation and integration into new communities present extreme challenges, including finding housing, securing employment, establishing social connections, and overcoming psychological trauma caused by the loss of homes, loved ones, and familiar ways of life.

Effective social work with IDPs must address not only their basic needs but also facilitate successful social adaptation, reduce tension in receiving communities, and foster psychological resilience and integration into new environments. Given the protracted and large-scale nature of the conflict, implementing innovative approaches to social work is crucial to ensure effective IDP adaptation and promote sustainable development of receiving communities. The relevance of this topic stems from the need to develop practical adaptation models that incorporate international experience, national legislation, and Ukraine's sociocultural context.

**Theoretical foundations of research.** The beginning of the anti-terrorist operation in eastern Ukraine, followed by Russia's full-scale invasion of our country, created an extremely complex situation in both political and socio-economic spheres. This led to a significant increase in the number of people facing difficult life circumstances, particularly becoming refugees, internally displaced persons, or losing jobs and homes. The term "internally displaced person" became widely used in Ukraine in 2014 as a direct consequence of Russia's armed aggression against Ukraine.

According to the Law of Ukraine "On Ensuring the Rights and Freedoms of Internally Displaced Persons," an internally displaced person is defined as a citizen of Ukraine, foreigner, or stateless person legally residing in Ukraine with permanent residence rights who was forced to leave or abandon their place of residence due to or to avoid the negative consequences of armed conflict, temporary occupation, widespread violence, human rights violations, or natural/technogenic emergencies [4].

To be recognized as internally displaced, a person must meet the following key criteria:

1. Be a citizen of Ukraine, foreigner, or stateless person legally residing in Ukraine with permanent residence rights;
2. Be forced to leave or abandon their place of residence due to or to avoid the negative consequences of armed conflict, temporary occupation, violence, human rights violations, or emergencies [5, p. 113].

Thus, the defining characteristic of IDPs is the forced nature of displacement from their permanent residence due to threats to life or health.

Internally displaced persons require comprehensive assistance and support, including material, financial, social, and psychological aid. This population group experiences constant stress caused by forced relocation, disruption of stable lifestyles, loss of homes, relatives, friends and family members. All these factors negatively impact psychological well-being. Difficult life circumstances provoke feelings of discomfort, reduced social activity and self-esteem, increased anxiety, aggression and negative attitudes toward others.

Social work with internally displaced persons is a complex and multifaceted process aimed at ensuring their social, psychological and economic well-being. Social work for IDP adaptation involves helping them adjust to their environment and restore social functions. IDP adaptation implies integration into society through developing self-awareness and role behavior, self-control capacity, and establishing adequate connections and relationships. This represents an active process of social environment adaptation focused on maintaining and creating an optimal balance between the individual, their internal state and immediate environment in the present with future perspective [7, p. 82].

Conditionally, the following types of social work with IDPs are distinguished:

1. Practical social work involves direct engagement with individuals or groups seeking social assistance;
2. Organizational work encompasses agency operations and development of specific activity programs [1].

The main directions of social work with IDPs include social diagnostics, prevention, rehabilitation, correction, and therapy. These measures aim to ensure a holistic approach that considers personal interests, needs, and value orientations, while creating conditions that mobilize internal potential to overcome challenges. Currently, IDPs receive a wide range of services including medical, legal, administrative, and psychosocial support. The primary goal of these interventions is to facilitate IDP adaptation to new conditions and ensure their optimal functioning [3, p. 114].

Social work for IDP adaptation helps them adjust to their environment and restore social functions. IDP adaptation involves societal integration through developing self-awareness, role behavior, self-control capacity, and establishing appropriate connections and relationships. This represents an active process of social environment adaptation focused on maintaining and creating an optimal balance between the individual, their internal state, and immediate environment in both present and future contexts [7, p. 82].

Given the growing challenges of IDP integration, attention must be paid to modern tools and resources that can enhance social work. Research by A. Kolomiets, O. Palamarchuk, H. Shulha, and L. Kolomiets (2019) highlights the potential of information technologies and volunteer engagement in social work. The authors note that IT can significantly optimize communication, information dissemination, and coordination efforts, while volunteer activities form an integral part of modern social work, particularly in crisis situations. This expands support possibilities and facilitates socio-pedagogical adaptation of IDPs through more flexible and effective interaction mechanisms with receiving communities [3].

Researchers I. Grygorenko and N. Savelyeva identify the following key directions of social work with IDPs [1]:

1. Labor and professional adaptation: Focused on facilitating employment considering IDPs' qualifications and labor market needs. Vocational training and retraining play crucial roles in enhancing employability and competitiveness. Social workers assist with job searches, organize professional development trainings, and support self-employment initiatives.
2. Material assistance: Addresses overcoming financial hardships through housing provision, medical services, and legal compensation payments. Social workers help assess damages, organize psychosocial support programs, and create conditions for successful integration.
3. Harmonious relations with local communities: Aims to foster positive coexistence through IDP participation in community-building and adaptation to local traditions and behavioral norms. Mutual support groups facilitate relationship-building and integration.
4. Psychological adaptation and rehabilitation: Psychologists and mental health professionals help overcome trauma through counseling and rehabilitation programs, restoring emotional balance and supporting active adaptation.
5. Successful integration conditions: Implements diverse programs promoting social equality through individualized approaches and effective intercultural communication systems that reduce cultural barriers and create harmonious coexistence conditions.

Y. Pelissier notes that social work for IDP adaptation should be implemented through various approaches corresponding to the problems this population faces due to changes in their social and cultural environment. The main directions of social work include social, socio-psychological, socio-pedagogical, socio-legal, medico-social, socio-economic, material, socio-informational, and socio-labor dimensions. For instance, the social dimension involves various institutions, particularly the Pension Fund, and includes: conducting social consultations; social rehabilitation measures in both inpatient and outpatient settings; social diagnostics; identifying individuals requiring priority social assistance; helping IDPs obtain pensions and other payments; detecting and preventing deviant behavior among IDPs and their family members; facilitating self-help and mutual aid groups; organizing cultural and recreational activities for elderly and disabled IDPs; preventing child homelessness (including placement in orphanages and boarding schools);

addressing adult homelessness (assisting with temporary housing, dormitories, or home acquisition, as well as kindergarten and care home placements); supporting property restitution or compensation; and coordinating with governmental and civic organizations to aid IDPs [8, p. 203].

Researcher N. Mazina distinguishes two main forms of social work with IDPs: classical and non-classical (informal) forms. Classical social work involves providing all types of assistance and social services that represent standard social work technologies applicable to all citizens facing difficult life circumstances. These classical forms reflect guaranteed social support and state social services available to everyone, including IDPs. Non-traditional approaches employ specialized rehabilitation and adaptation techniques for individuals, families, or social groups. These approaches are based on psychological and technical diagnostic methods for assessing clients, their families, and their micro-social environments. Such techniques may target psychological problem-solving and support adaptation following trauma or crisis situations [6, p. 133].

The success of IDP social adaptation depends on both individual psychological characteristics and environmental factors. Therefore, professionals should adopt a comprehensive approach: working with each client to restore and enhance their adaptive potential while improving the broader micro-social environment and its specific aspects [7, p. 82].

Existing research on IDP adaptation underscores the multidimensional and complex nature of this phenomenon. Ukrainian scholars pay particular attention to various aspects of IDPs' livelihoods and integration into new territorial communities, focusing on systemic challenges and socio-psychological features of this process. Researchers such as O. Balakireva, Ye. Dubrovskaya, I. Zvereva, A. Kapska, H. Laktionova, I. Polishchuk, and D. Tkach have explored the theoretical significance of IDP issues in their works. The social dimension of this problem is examined in studies by A. Akmalova, Ye. Dubrovskaya, O. Zaleska, and others. Psychological factors affecting IDPs are addressed in works by O. Blinova, V. Panko, and colleagues. Demographers O. Zaleska and O. Zastavetska have investigated internal migration trends in Ukraine. Legal and social protection frameworks for IDPs have been analyzed by scholars including A. Bushchenko and O. Martynenko. A review of existing literature reveals that while numerous studies address IDP issues, most focus on isolated aspects. Given the complexity and urgency of this topic, more comprehensive research is needed.

**The purpose of the article.** The study aims to identify the characteristics of socio-psychological adaptation among internally displaced persons (IDPs) through empirical research to substantiate effective approaches to social work with this population.

**Methods.** To examine the socio-psychological adaptation of IDPs, we employed the Rogers-Diamond methodology, which provides a comprehensive assessment of key adaptation process components. This instrument measures: levels of self-acceptance and acceptance of others; locus of control type (internal/external); emotional state (comfort/discomfort); overall adaptation level; dominance/submission tendencies; and escapism propensity. To determine stress levels among IDPs, we used the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10). A custom-designed questionnaire helped identify specific adaptation challenges faced by IDPs.

**Sample.** We conducted empirical research on IDP adaptation challenges in conflict conditions at the "Social Services Center" of Tyvriv Settlement Council (5 Liali Ratushna St., Tyvriv urban-type settlement). The study sample comprised 62 IDPs receiving services at the Center during the research period, including 9 men and 53 women aged 23-60 who had resided in Kherson, Kharkiv, Mykolaiv, Zaporizhzhia, Luhansk, or Sumy regions before February 24, 2022. Some participants had witnessed combat, endured constant shelling, or lived under occupation.

**Results and discussion.** The aggregated findings from the Rogers-Diamond methodology are presented in Table 1.

*Table 1*

**Results of the General Distribution of Socio-Psychological Adaptation Indicators Among IDPs Using the Rogers-Diamond Methodology**

<b>Socio-psychological indicator</b>	<b>Percentage indicator</b>
Acceptance of Others	62%
Non-acceptance of Others	38%
Internal Locus of Control	61%
External Locus of Control	39%
Adaptation	45%
Maladaptation	55%
Non-acceptance of Self	36%

Acceptance of Self	64%
Dominance	56%
Conformity	44%
Emotional Comfort	58%
Psychological distress	42%
Presence of Escapism	34%
Absence of Escapism	66%

The adaptation indicators (45%) versus maladaptation (55%) show a predominance of the latter, indicating difficulties in adjusting to new living conditions. This is typical for IDPs who lost their homes, disruption of social ties, role changes, etc. There are signs of internal tension, dissatisfaction with the situation, and potential vulnerability to psychological distress.

On the scales of "acceptance of others" (62%) versus "rejection of others" (38%), a relatively high level of trust in the environment and readiness for interpersonal interaction was observed, which is a positive resource in the adaptation process. However, the 38% rejection rate indicates residual difficulties in interaction, possibly due to previous experiences of loss.

Empirical indicators on the scales of "self-acceptance" (64%) versus "self-rejection" (36%) point to established positive self-perception, which serves as a protective factor in stressful situations. This suggests the presence of internal resources for overcoming difficulties, despite general manifestations of maladaptation.

In behavioral control, "internal control" (61%) prevails over "external control" (39%), indicating an orientation toward personal responsibility and a tendency to seek causes of events within oneself, which may contribute to active problem-solving. At the same time, nearly 40% external control reflects some belief in external circumstances as the source of difficulties, typical of experienced traumatic events.

On the scales of "dominance" (56%) versus "submissiveness" (44%), we conclude that IDPs tend toward activity, initiative, and control over situations and others, but against a backdrop of emotional instability, this may manifest as rigidity, intolerance, or tension in communication.

Regarding the emotional state of IDPs, there is a slight predominance of "emotional comfort" (58%) over "psychological distress" (42%), indicating relative emotional stability. However, the significant level of psychological distress suggests experienced stress, anxiety, and possibly post-traumatic symptoms. This is characteristic of individuals who have lost stability and remain in a state of uncertainty.

Escapism tendencies are as follows: "presence of escapism" (34%) versus "absence of escapism" (66%), indicating that the majority does not avoid reality, which is a positive marker of mature coping. However, one-third of respondents exhibit a tendency to avoid reality, which may be a defensive reaction to excessive stress.

In summarizing the results, we can draw conclusions about the characteristics of IDP adaptation: they possess internal resources, particularly self-acceptance, acceptance of others, internal control, and mostly emotional comfort. However, maladaptation predominates, indicating psychological strain, high vulnerability to war conditions, and a need for psychosocial support.

According to the PSS-10 methodology, the largest proportion of respondents (48.4%) had high stress levels. Moderate stress levels were recorded in 29% of respondents, while low stress levels were observed in 22.6% of IDPs. These data indicate a significant impact of stress factors on the majority of respondents, highlighting the need for additional measures to reduce stress levels, such as psychological support, stress management training, and improved living conditions.

Summarizing the survey results, we found that most respondents (62.9%) have lived in the community for more than a year, meaning adaptation is still ongoing, with persisting difficulties related to housing, employment, and social integration. All respondents have official IDP status, and the majority (93.5%) feel support from the local community. However, assessments of the level of acceptance by the local community indicate certain integration problems, as only 29% of respondents consider this level high, while 45.2% consider it low.

Housing conditions and material difficulties remain relevant for 53.2% of respondents, while 53.2% face challenges in finding employment. At the same time, nearly 59.7% of respondents report persistent stress due to displacement, underscoring the need for psychological support, particularly through specialized assistance programs. The study also showed that only 30% of respondents have found employment in their new location, while 53.3% are still seeking job opportunities. This emphasizes the importance of developing social projects and programs for employment and vocational retraining for IDPs. Considering these problems, respondents indicated the need for housing provision, material support, access

to work and education, as well as psychological support. This points to the need for comprehensive measures to facilitate the adaptation process for IDPs, which should include not only social support but also vocational training and psychosocial assistance.

Thus, the obtained results highlight the importance of integrating IDPs into local communities and the need for comprehensive support encompassing both social and psychological aspects of adaptation.

**Conclusions.** The study results indicate that internally displaced persons demonstrate certain adaptive potential, particularly due to internal resources such as self-acceptance, acceptance of others, and internal locus of control. However, maladaptation predominates, reflecting difficulties in adjusting to new living conditions. While most respondents maintain relative emotional stability, a significant portion experiences psychological distress and elevated stress levels. Approximately one-third of individuals exhibit reality-avoidance tendencies, potentially resulting from psychological exhaustion.

The adaptation process remains slow even after prolonged residence in host communities and is further complicated by housing, employment, and social integration challenges. Although most IDPs perceive community support, the level of acceptance by local residents remains insufficient. These findings collectively underscore the need for comprehensive support measures combining social, material, and psychological assistance.

**Research prospects.** Future socio-psychological research should focus on examining factors influencing successful adaptation and community integration. Priority areas include analysis of psychoemotional states, stress levels, and effectiveness of psychosocial support. Establishing connections between adaptation strategies, control attitudes, and value orientations would be particularly valuable. Subsequent studies should contribute to developing comprehensive social assistance and support programs for IDPs.

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**FEATURES OF SOCIAL WORK ON INTERPERSONAL INTERACTION OF  
ADOLESCENTS WITH CEREBRAL PALSY IN AN INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT UNDER  
MARTIAL LAW**

*Проведено теоретичний аналіз сучасних підходів у психологічній літературі до поняття міжособистісної взаємодії серед підлітків з опорно-руховими розладами. У статті розглядаються особливості міжособистісної взаємодії у дітей з церебральним паралічем та відповідні форми соціальної роботи. Підкреслено практичну цінність соціальної взаємодії, а також вплив воєнного стану на взаємодію цієї категорії дітей з навколишнім середовищем. Розуміння відмінностей між дітьми з інвалідністю та їхніми однолітками допомагає покращити підтримку та допомогу, що надаються суспільством. З кожним роком зростає важливість інклюзивного середовища через збільшення кількості людей з інвалідністю, багато з яких не мають доступу до тих самих переваг, що й інші, через свої фізичні обмеження. В умовах воєнного стану в Україні це питання стало ще більш актуальним, оскільки багато людей зараз отримують інвалідність через травми, а необхідні умови для створення інклюзивного середовища часто недоступні через різні обставини. Тому, крім основних методів, що використовуються фахівцями з соціальної роботи, з'являються нові, які можуть функціонувати незалежно від місцезнаходження клієнта. Була обрана система методів і психодіагностичних технік для вивчення міжособистісної взаємодії серед підлітків з опорно-руховими розладами в інклюзивному середовищі. Результати свідчать про адаптивний характер розвитку міжособистісних відносин серед підлітків з церебральним паралічем. Однак важливо врахувати, що значний відсоток респондентів демонструє схильність до дезадаптивної поведінки. Дослідження показало, що майже всі діти зазнали негативних наслідків війни, які вплинули на всі сфери життя: здоров'я, освіти, дозвілля, сім'ю та дружні стосунки. Проте міжособистісна взаємодія з близькими родичами та найближчим оточенням є однією з сфер, яка зазнала найбільших змін.*

*На основі результатів дослідження було розроблено соціальний проект для підлітків з опорно-руховими розладами, що включає методи арт-терапії та соціодрами. Отримані дані надали важливу інформацію про потреби, проблеми та очікування цієї вразливої групи молоді, що дозволило визначити ключові напрямки та заходи для реалізації соціального проекту.*

**Ключові слова:** соціальна робота, міжособистісна взаємодія, підлітки з церебральним паралічем, інклюзивне середовище, умови воєнного стану.

*A theoretical analysis of modern approaches in psychological literature to the concept of interpersonal interaction among adolescents with musculoskeletal disorders has been carried out. This paper examines the specific features of interpersonal interaction in children with cerebral palsy and the relevant forms of social work. The practical value of social interaction has been highlighted, as well as the impact of martial law on the interaction of this category of children with their environment. Understanding the differences between children with disabilities and their peers helps enhance the support and assistance provided by society. The growing importance of an inclusive environment is emphasized each year due to the increasing number of people with disabilities, many of whom lack access to the same benefits as others due to their physical limitations. Under martial law in Ukraine, this issue has become even more pressing, as many individuals are now acquiring disabilities due to injuries, while the necessary conditions for creating an inclusive environment are often unavailable due to various circumstances. Therefore, in addition to the basic methods used by social work professionals, new ones are emerging that can function regardless of the client's location.*

*A system of methods and psychodiagnostic techniques was selected to study interpersonal interaction among adolescents with musculoskeletal disorders in an inclusive environment. The results indicate an adaptive pattern in the development of interpersonal relationships among adolescents with cerebral palsy. However, it is important to consider that a significant percentage of respondents demonstrate a tendency toward maladaptive behavior. The study found that almost all children have experienced the negative effects of war, which have affected all areas of life: health, education, leisure, family, and friendships. Nonetheless, interpersonal interaction with close family and immediate surroundings is one of the areas that has undergone the greatest changes.*

*Based on the research results, a social project was developed for adolescents with musculoskeletal disorders, incorporating art therapy methods and sociodrama. The data obtained provided important insights into the needs, problems, and expectations of this vulnerable group of young people, which allowed for the identification of key directions and measures for implementation in the social project.*

**Keywords:** *social work, interpersonal interaction, adolescents with cerebral palsy, inclusive environment, martial law conditions.*

**Introduction.** In today's world, the number of people with disabilities continues to grow each year, as confirmed by statistics and the increasing attention society pays to the issues faced by this category of individuals. People with disabilities encounter many barriers to full societal participation, with children — especially those with cerebral palsy — facing even greater difficulties.

Cerebral palsy (CP) is a group of neurological disorders caused by abnormal brain development or damage to parts of the brain that control muscle tone and motor activity, resulting in impaired movement, balance, and posture. This category of children faces numerous challenges that affect not only their physical health but also other areas of life, complicating their socialization. However, in social work, there are many methods of assistance and support designed to help mitigate the negative effects of the condition on a child's development. These methods continue to evolve and are applied in various institutions that serve children with CP [1].

As mentioned, the range of available assistance is quite broad; however, it is largely focused on helping the child and their immediate family, while comprehensive work with the broader society is often lacking. As a result, children with cerebral palsy (CP) mainly receive only tolerant and patient treatment from others, rather than genuine interaction. This negatively affects the development and socialization of children with CP, who require not only kindness from others but also simple interpersonal communication, just like any other person, regardless of their specific needs. This issue arises from stereotypes about people with CP, leading to stigmatization, exclusion, and social isolation.

To improve adaptation and socialization, it is essential to understand the situation, respond constructively, foster empathy, and build a supportive environment. Today, the interaction of children with CP and their environment is a serious issue. Even before the war, it was a significant challenge due to

society's unpreparedness, and under current wartime conditions, organizing interpersonal communication has become nearly impossible for various reasons. Children with CP often lose not only friendships but also close contact with family due to the war, which only exacerbates the problem. Therefore, it is essential to study the characteristics of interpersonal interaction in children with CP and the forms of social work with them, as well as to practically establish the importance of interaction with others, determine the impact of martial law on these children's social connections, and identify how they differ from others to improve support and assistance from society.

Theoretical and methodological foundations of interpersonal interaction in children with CP have been explored by researchers such as S. A. Bortfeld, O. V. Bezpalko, A. Y. Kapska, S. V. Sytnyk, I. V. Chukhriy, A. H. Shevtsov, and others.

**Theoretical and Methodological Foundations of the Study.** There is no unified definition of interpersonal relationships in science due to the multifaceted nature of the term and differing scholarly perspectives. Interpersonal relationships can be interpreted as subjective connections and attitudes between individuals in social groups. They form a system of interpersonal orientations, expectations, and value orientations that shape the content of people's joint activities [3, p.6].

Researchers note that interpersonal relationships arise from emotions and attitudes toward others but are also guided by social norms and patterns established by society [5; 7; 10]. In other words, interpersonal relationships are connections between individuals that emerge based on emotional perceptions and feelings toward others, shaping the nature and form of interaction and are experienced subjectively.

The impairments caused by CP affect not only the child but also their surroundings, as the condition presents specific challenges to daily life. Typically, children with CP have poor social contacts with peers and even family members, leading to isolation and withdrawal. This is often the result of underdeveloped communication skills and a lack of trust in others. These factors adversely affect both the child and their ability to build interpersonal relationships.

When examining the specifics of interpersonal interaction in children with CP, certain traits of these children must be considered as they may cause difficulties. These children are often passive, hesitant, emotionally unstable, and have low activity levels, which leads to their detachment from others.

Isolation and withdrawal are the result of a lack of communication with both peers and family members, negatively impacting the child's functioning in society. This is expressed through social maladaptation, inability to form emotional bonds, failure to perform social roles, and the emergence of stress and anxiety.

These factors hinder the child's normal functioning in society and, consequently, their socialization, without which they cannot live a full life, as humans are inherently social beings who require daily interaction with others.

Children with CP often exhibit low self-awareness and self-confidence, which can negatively impact their peer relationships due to a distorted self-concept [13–15]. In social settings — with both peers and adults — they often remain passive and depend on adult guidance and encouragement. This group is also prone to distancing and avoiding contact with others due to fears and preconceived notions, often stemming from how society treats them.

When a child with CP attempts to initiate conversation, they often face misunderstanding from others due to their mannerisms, movements, or speech, which are difficult for them. After repeated failures in establishing contact, the child may lose the desire to try again, leading to further isolation. Nevertheless, some children with CP strive to connect with others out of a desire for support and to feel "normal," which can sometimes be exploited by others and lead to manipulation. Such experiences are particularly distressing for these sensitive children, often causing anxiety, stress, and further withdrawal.

A key factor in interpersonal interaction is society itself, which has the capacity to meet the needs of children with musculoskeletal disorders, but at the same time, due to unpreparedness and lack of awareness, often fails to provide even basic necessities [8–11].

There are many stereotypes and societal attitudes toward people with CP that hinder their interaction and negatively affect their overall life trajectory. For children with CP, these effects are even

more harmful. Social stereotypes and misconceptions about CP influence how others relate to these children, and this, in turn, affects interpersonal interaction, without which it is extremely difficult for them to adapt and socialize [4].

While society often shows tolerance toward children with CP and tries to improve their living conditions, they need more than just special accommodations—they also need simple interaction. Children with motor impairments share the same fundamental needs as their peers. However, society tends to remain distant, considering ordinary interaction insufficient or even unsafe for children with CP, which worsens their development and labels them as “outsiders,” furthering their isolation.

Peer rejection is a common phenomenon in society, driven by visible differences and the lack of educational support within families. This not only causes withdrawal among children with disabilities but also leads to bullying and mistreatment from peers. Such experiences cause deep emotional pain and can foster additional negative traits that further hinder interpersonal interaction.

Therefore, as we can see, interpersonal interaction is a crucial element in the development of children with CP. Interaction with others, based on various motivations and biases, helps these children socialize and develop essential life skills. However, the specifics of such interaction are shaped not only by the child's physical and psychological characteristics, which differentiate them from others, but also by society's attitude toward them – often laden with stereotypes and prejudice.

Inclusion is the process of integrating people with special needs into active social life, regardless of their physical, psychological, or social abilities, encompassing political, educational, civic, and other areas.

An inclusive environment is a space where everyone, regardless of their differences, has equal access to all activities[6].

The relevance of an inclusive environment continues to grow each year due to the increasing number of people with disabilities, many of whom, because of their limitations, do not have access to the same benefits as others. Under martial law in Ukraine, this relevance has become even more urgent, as many individuals have sustained injuries resulting in disabilities, while the conditions required to create an inclusive environment are often inadequate due to various circumstances. As a result, in addition to the basic methods used by social work professionals, new approaches have emerged that can function independently of the client's location [7, pp. 2–11].

Among the areas of social work related to interpersonal interaction of children with CP in an inclusive environment, direct work with the children is emphasized to mitigate and reduce the impact of negative phenomena and to help them acquire necessary qualities and skills. Work is also conducted with the child's surroundings to inform them about the specific needs of these children and provide clear guidance on interacting with them.

When addressing interpersonal interaction in children with CP, the work includes various methods that differ in direction, nature, and their place within the overall stages of intervention. Generally, three main stages can be identified: diagnostic, development of an individual program and direct assistance, and evaluation and adjustment of actions.

At the diagnostic stage, different groups of methods are used to identify and assess specific characteristics of a child with CP, which are later used to form an individual program. These include: statistical and structural analysis methods; measurement methods; modeling (constructing); and forecasting.

Specific methods used in these categories include:

- Observation, aimed at identifying behavioral characteristics of the child with CP during interpersonal interaction and assessing their interest in engaging with others;
- Biographical method, which allows the social work specialist to trace the child's interpersonal development through significant life events and determine the cause of social isolation;
- Interview, which helps gather both verbal and non-verbal information regarding aspects of interpersonal interaction through simple and leading questions;

- Survey, which allows children with CP to express their opinions without direct verbal interaction, which is especially useful for those who struggle with speech or are highly withdrawn;
- And others [12].

All these methods provide the specialist with a clear understanding of the challenges the child with CP faces, and help to develop a personalized plan aimed at ensuring the child's comfort within the inclusive environment and building necessary interpersonal skills.

After diagnosing the state of interpersonal relationships in a child with CP, an individual program is developed. This includes comprehensive rehabilitation involving medical, social, and psychological support, utilizing both general and specific methods.

Depending on the direction and nature of the work, the social work specialist uses pedagogical, psychological, and social methods. Common approaches include both individual and group methods, as well as psychotherapy focused on helping the child with CP on emotional, cognitive, and behavioral levels to address interpersonal difficulties.

In addition to the aforementioned methods, other techniques frequently used by social workers with children with CP include:

- Psychodrama – a role-playing activity in which the client acts out a problem relevant to them and seeks a resolution through the play;
- Art therapy – a form of psychotherapy based on artistic expression (e.g., sculpting, drawing, creating collages, etc.);
- Play therapy – a form of psychotherapy where the client receives support through play [9].

Regarding work with society, efforts are aimed at assessing public awareness of the interpersonal needs of children with CP, informing the public on ways to improve these children's conditions, and conducting various activities, such as:

- Trainings, where participants gain the necessary skills and qualities for effective interaction with children with CP;
- Round tables, where issues faced by children with CP are discussed and solutions are explored;
- Consultations, which help individuals manage their concerns about interpersonal interaction with children with CP;
- And others [1].

Under martial law, all activities and technologies related to social work undergo a series of changes caused by various factors, the most significant being the threat to life. As a result, phone consultations and meetings via various platforms and applications have become increasingly popular. The use of technology to help clients solve certain issues is a relatively new method that enables professionals to offer support remotely whenever needed. Additionally, in wartime conditions, children with CP and their surroundings experience stress caused by fear for their lives and the situation in the country. Therefore, specialists have started using gadgets in their work to alleviate client anxiety by allowing sessions to take place in environments that are comfortable for the individual.

Thus, social work aimed at interpersonal interaction in an inclusive environment is conducted with both the child with musculoskeletal impairments and their social environment. In working with the child, various methods are employed, classified and applied at different stages. These may include basic consultations, psychodrama, art therapy, training sessions, or roundtable discussions. In addition, specialists use phone consultations and online meetings and workshops, a necessity under Ukraine's martial law.

Following a detailed review and analysis of theoretical materials on interpersonal interaction among children with CP in an inclusive environment under martial law in Ukraine, an empirical study was conducted to examine the topic in greater depth.

**Experimental Section.** The experimental study was carried out at the State Rehabilitation Institution "Promin" Center for Comprehensive Rehabilitation for Children with Disabilities. A total of 52 individuals with musculoskeletal disorders participated in the study.

The psychodiagnostic toolkit included: a questionnaire titled "Interpersonal Relationships in an Inclusive Environment," a focus group interview on the topic "Problems of Interpersonal Interaction of

Children with CP under Martial Law,” the T. Leary Interpersonal Relationship Diagnostic Method, the Self-Esteem Quantification Test by S.A. Budass, the “Tree” Self-Evaluation Method (by D. Lampem, adapted by L.P. Ponomarenko), and the Anxiety Level Assessment Method developed by C.D. Spielberger and adapted by Yu.A. Khanin.

The questionnaire on interpersonal relationships in an inclusive environment yielded insightful data, largely confirming the theoretical analysis. Regarding the comfort level of children with CP in inclusive environments, 75% of respondents reported feeling comfortable, 3% found it difficult to answer, and 22% noted some level of discomfort.

Among those who found the inclusive environment uncomfortable, the reasons given included: 42% felt like “outsiders,” 25% indicated that activities were too difficult, and 17% cited difficulties in establishing relationships with others.

We also examined how frequently children with CP initiated conversations. The most common responses were “Rarely” (35%) and “Sometimes” (31%), while “Quite often” and “Never” received 18% and 16%, respectively.

Regarding how children with CP felt during interpersonal interaction, the most common responses were “Difficult to answer” (33%) and “I don’t feel very well” (29%). The reasons for these responses included: lack of common topics (14%), tactlessness of conversation partners (30%), interactions motivated by pity (24%), negative past experiences (16%), personal characteristics of the children (11%), and other reasons (5%).

Additionally, the study revealed that 49% of children with CP require adult support in establishing interpersonal relationships.

Thus, this method allowed us to determine that the inclusive environment is not yet ideal and requires improvement. A significant number of children with CP – 42%-reported feeling like “outsiders,” which contradicts the very concept of inclusion. Moreover, 25% struggled with the difficulty of the activities, and 17% noted challenges in building relationships. Furthermore, most children initiated interactions only “Rarely” or “Sometimes,” which is a concerning indicator. The study also showed that 33% found it difficult to describe their emotional state during interaction, while 29% reported not feeling well. These feelings were most often caused by the tactlessness or pity of others, which served as the basis for interaction with children who have musculoskeletal impairments.

The focus group interview revealed that nearly all children had experienced the negative effects of the war, which affected every aspect of their lives – health, education, leisure, family, and friends. However, interpersonal relationships with close relatives and immediate surroundings were among the most significantly affected areas.

In response to the question about changes in interpersonal interaction with others caused by the war, 37% of respondents reported negative changes, including increased isolation and emotional withdrawal from close relatives. In contrast, 11% of the children noted positive shifts, such as improved relationships.

Among the most common reasons cited by children with CP for deteriorating interpersonal relationships were: lack of time from family members and others due to the war, stress and emotional tension experienced by both the children and those around them, and disruptions to daily routines and familiar lifestyles. Some challenges were linked to changes in residence and the process of adapting to a new environment, particularly among internally displaced families with children with CP.

Participants in the interview indicated that during martial law in Ukraine, 31% of respondents had attended events aimed at fostering interpersonal relationships. Additionally, 45% expressed a desire to participate in similar activities, while 24% reported not attending any events and had no interest in doing so.

The final question aimed to identify helpful forms of support for interpersonal interaction among children with CP during martial law in Ukraine. Suggestions included organizing creative clubs and various practical training sessions focused on developing interpersonal communication skills. Children with CP also emphasized the need for adult support to help them cope with stress and negative emotions caused by

the war. To examine the communication sphere of adolescents with musculoskeletal disorders, we applied the T. Leary Interpersonal Relationship Diagnostic Method.

The results indicate an adaptive pattern of interpersonal relationship development among adolescents with CP. However, it should be noted that a significant portion of respondents exhibited a tendency toward maladaptive behavior. This was most pronounced in the following octants: egocentrism, aggressiveness, authoritarianism, and dependency. Lower scores were recorded in octants indicating tendencies toward pathological interpersonal behavior, including egocentrism, aggressiveness, and submissiveness. These patterns characterize the respondents as prone to conflict, unwilling to compromise, and uninterested in aligning with the views of others or the goals of their peer groups. It can be assumed that these developmental deviations are influenced by adolescence, improper upbringing, physical disabilities, and the negative impact of the war in Ukraine.

To assess self-esteem among adolescents with musculoskeletal disorders, we also used the “Quantitative Assessment of Self-Esteem” test by S.A. Budass.

Based on the results, the majority of adolescents with such impairments – 25% of respondents - had low self-esteem, while 14% had below-average levels. These children tend to be highly sensitive to criticism, strive to accommodate the opinions of others, and often suffer from an “inferiority complex.” This is also linked to their orientation toward communication, peer acceptance, and reference groups. Consequently, adolescents with CP are particularly vulnerable to group pressure and manipulation. 17% of respondents demonstrated average self-esteem. These individuals generally displayed non-confrontational behavior and tended to behave constructively in conflict situations.

High self-esteem was reported in 20% of respondents. This could be attributed to an idealized self-image, overestimation of their abilities, and a tendency to view reality through an emotional lens. They often interpret failures as the result of external factors rather than their own shortcomings. These individuals may perceive justified criticism as fault-finding and are typically more prone to conflict, often taking an assertive stance in disputes and striving for dominance. In cases of inappropriately high self-esteem, this behavior may be attributed to poor parenting practices such as overprotection, which in turn can be linked to the child’s physical impairments and the negative influence of martial law.

Thus, both excessively high and low self-esteem make adolescents with CP less communicative. They may either feel no need for interaction due to a sense of self-sufficiency or struggle to build relationships because of low self-esteem and emotional insecurity.

The study also used the projective self-evaluation method “The Tree” (by D. Lampem, adapted by L.P. Ponomarenko) among adolescents with musculoskeletal disorders. It revealed that most respondents had low self-esteem. In the “Real Self” column, the most frequently chosen characteristics were: orientation toward overcoming obstacles, crisis state, “falling into an abyss,” detachment, introversion, and anxiety-indicating internal problems and low self-esteem. However, characteristics like sociability, friendly support, stable status, comfortable state, and normal adaptation were also chosen by a significant number of adolescents, indicating aspects of balanced development and self-acceptance.

The least selected characteristic was “leadership orientation,” indicating that exaggerated self-esteem was uncommon. Other frequently chosen traits included fatigue, general weakness, limited energy, and shyness, which can be attributed to physical disabilities and the negative effects of the war.

In the “Ideal Self” column, the most common traits chosen by adolescents with CP were: a comfortable state, normal adaptation, leadership orientation, sociability, friendly support, orientation toward overcoming obstacles, and a desire for fun – indicating their aspiration to improve and move toward a more comfortable and fulfilling life.

According to the results of the anxiety assessment conducted using the methodology by C. Spielberger and Yu. Khanin, the level of trait anxiety was found to be at a moderate level in 36% of respondents, low in 12%, and high in 52%. A high level of trait anxiety may be associated with neurotic conflicts, emotional breakdowns, and psychosomatic disorders..

The level of state anxiety was moderate in 39% of respondents, low in 7%, and high in 54%. The elevated state anxiety scores suggest a heightened emotional response to extreme situations, which is an important indicator

Thus, the war negatively impacts all areas of life for children with CP, and interpersonal relationships are among the most affected. As reported by children with musculoskeletal disorders, the most common causes include relocation and the need to adapt to new environments, lack of time and attention from family members, and increased stress and anxiety – all of which impair their psychological state and ability to engage in interpersonal communication.

However, many children with CP need support in the form of organized activities such as creative workshops, training sessions, and meetings with psychologists and other professionals to help facilitate their interpersonal interactions.

In summary, the communication skills of children with CP are complicated by personal, psychological, and physical developmental characteristics, which are determined by their condition and the negative effects of martial law. Often, communication difficulties in children with motor disorders result from social maladaptation or lead to a decline in their adaptability within society. Disrupted social contact can result in various personality development issues in these children. Without timely and professional psychological and pedagogical correction, or without the prevention and constructive resolution of interpersonal conflicts, such difficulties may even lead to the formation of negative character traits.

The challenges faced by people with disabilities have always existed and have negatively affected all aspects of life, especially interpersonal relationships, which are vital for development. This issue is particularly acute for children with disabilities, who often experience isolation both due to their unique needs and societal attitudes.

In our case, the focus is on children with CP, for whom establishing interpersonal relationships is particularly difficult for several reasons identified in our research: tactlessness from others, feelings of being an “outsider,” individual traits, negative past experiences, excessive pity, and more. During martial law in Ukraine, these problems have intensified, adding stress, emotional strain, deteriorating relationships, disrupted routines, lack of time, and the inability to attend essential developmental events.

Therefore, a wide range of working methods—both with children and adults – are being improved, making it possible to provide remote assistance at any time.

The results of this study significantly influenced the development of a social project for adolescents with musculoskeletal disorders. The data gathered offered valuable insights into the needs, problems, and expectations of this vulnerable group, enabling the design of effective directions and activities for inclusion in the social project.

In our view, one of the most effective ways to support the development of interpersonal interaction in children with CP is through the creation and implementation of social projects based on art therapy and sociodrama. From this perspective, we developed a targeted social project called “Art Heals.” This initiative aligns with the needs of modern society, which increasingly emphasizes inclusion, equal opportunities, and support for people with disabilities.

Creating a supportive inclusive environment in which adolescents with motor impairments receive the help they need can positively influence their self-identity, self-esteem, and overall quality of life.

As a result of our “Art Heals” project, we expect to see improvements in interpersonal interaction - both among children with CP and within society at large. This includes children acquiring communication skills, greater social awareness about this group’s needs, and the potential for similar projects to be launched in the future.

**Conclusions.** A theoretical analysis of modern approaches in psychological literature concerning interpersonal interaction among adolescents with musculoskeletal disorders has been conducted. Interpersonal relationships in adolescents with cerebral palsy are a highly complex process shaped by numerous factors that undoubtedly influence their interactions with others.

The study revealed that nearly all children have experienced the negative impact of war, which has affected all areas of their lives - health, education, leisure, family, and friendships. However, interpersonal

interaction with close relatives and immediate surroundings is one of the areas that has undergone the most significant changes.

The research results significantly influenced the development of a social project for adolescents with musculoskeletal impairments. The collected data provided valuable insights into the needs, challenges, and expectations of this vulnerable group of young people, which helped to identify the key areas and activities for implementation within the project.

In our view, an effective way to support the development of interpersonal interaction in children with CP is through the creation of a social project based on art therapy and sociodrama techniques. Guided by this approach, we developed a targeted social project.

**Prospects for Further Research.** Future research should include studies that take into account gender and age aspects.

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## **MEDIATION IN EDUCATION AS A MEANS OF TRANSFORMING CONFLICT BEHAVIOR**

У статті розглядається мотиваційна готовність як психологічна передумова конструктивного розв'язання групових конфліктів у закладах вищої освіти. Аналізуються основні медіаційні стратегії, що застосовуються для нейтралізації конфліктних ситуацій у студентському середовищі. Обґрунтовується взаємозв'язок між рівнем мотиваційної готовності учасників освітнього процесу та ефективністю медіаційного втручання. Запропоновано модель інтеграції мотиваційного компоненту в практику медіації, що сприяє формуванню культури діалогу, толерантності та соціальної відповідальності. Результати дослідження можуть бути використані у підготовці фахівців з медіації, психологів, педагогів та адміністративного персоналу ЗВО.

У статті представлено результати емпіричного дослідження мотиваційних типів поведінки студентів у конфліктних ситуаціях. Встановлено, що у більшості респондентів (62%) домінує просоціальна мотивація, яка корелює з орієнтацією на співпрацю, компроміс і справедливе вирішення суперечностей. Егоцентричну мотивацію виявлено у 25% учасників, а унікальну або пасивну – у 13%. Аналіз ситуативної тривожності показав її підвищений рівень у 47% студентів, що асоціюється з зовнішньо мотивованими стратегіями поведінки. Поведінкові стилі, оцінені за методикою ROCI-II, засвідчили переважання інтеграційного (54%) та компромісного (31%) підходів. Фізіологічні показники (HRV, GSR) підтвердили зв'язок між внутрішньою мотивацією та емоційною стабільністю. Кореляційний аналіз виявив позитивну асоціацію між внутрішньою мотивацією та просоціальними стратегіями, а також негативний зв'язок між зовнішньою мотивацією та фізіологічною регуляцією. Гендерні особливості засвідчили, що дівчата частіше демонструють емпатійно-компромісну мотивацію та нижчий рівень тривожності, що підкреслює роль емоційної компетентності у формуванні адаптивної поведінки.

У статті представлено результати емпіричного дослідження мотиваційних профілів студентів у конфліктних ситуаціях в освітньому середовищі. Встановлено, що домінуючим типом мотивації є просоціальна орієнтація, яка корелює з конструктивними стратегіями поведінки та стабільними психофізіологічними реакціями. Водночас виявлено групу студентів із підвищеною тривожністю та зовнішньо мотивованими формами реагування, що супроводжуються емоційною нестабільністю. Отримані результати підтверджують важливість розвитку внутрішньої мотивації, емоційної саморегуляції та навичок конструктивної комунікації як чинників психологічного добробуту та соціальної адаптації здобувачів освіти.

**Ключові слова:** здобувачі освіти, медіатор, мотиваційна готовність, конструктивне розв'язання конфліктів, медіаційні стратегії, групові конфлікти, управління конфліктами, заклади вищої освіти.

The article examines motivational readiness as a psychological prerequisite for the constructive resolution of group conflicts in higher education institutions. The main mediation strategies used to neutralize conflict situations in the student environment are analyzed. The relationship between the level of motivational readiness of the participants in the educational process and the effectiveness of mediation intervention is substantiated. A model for integrating the motivational component into mediation practice is proposed, which contributes to the formation of a culture of dialogue, tolerance, and social responsibility. The research results can be applied in the training of mediators, psychologists, educators, and administrative staff of higher education institutions.

The article presents the results of an empirical study of students' motivational behavior types in conflict situations. It was found that most respondents (62%) demonstrate prosocial motivation, which correlates with a focus on cooperation, compromise, and fair conflict resolution. Egocentric motivation was identified in 25% of participants, and avoidant or passive motivation — in 13%. Analysis of situational anxiety revealed elevated levels in 47% of students, associated with externally motivated behavioral strategies. Behavioral styles, assessed by the ROCI-II method, showed the predominance of integrative

(54%) and compromising (31%) approaches. Physiological indicators (HRV, GSR) confirmed the relationship between intrinsic motivation and emotional stability. Correlation analysis revealed a positive association between intrinsic motivation and prosocial strategies, as well as a negative relationship between external motivation and physiological regulation. Gender differences indicated that female students more often display empathetic and compromise-oriented motivation and lower anxiety levels, emphasizing the role of emotional competence in forming adaptive behavior.

The study demonstrates that the dominant type of motivation among students in conflict situations within the educational environment is prosocial orientation, which correlates with constructive behavioral strategies and stable psychophysiological reactions. At the same time, a subgroup of students with heightened anxiety and externally motivated reactions accompanied by emotional instability was identified. The obtained results confirm the importance of developing intrinsic motivation, emotional self-regulation, and constructive communication skills as key factors of psychological well-being and social adaptation of students.

**Keywords:** students, mediator, motivational readiness, constructive conflict resolution, mediation strategies, group conflicts, conflict management, higher education institutions.

**Problem statement.** In modern society, conflicts have become an integral part of interpersonal and group interactions. Their effective resolution depends not only on the professionalism of the mediator but also on the internal motivational readiness of the participants for constructive dialogue. Psychological motivation as a factor of successful mediation is actively studied by both Ukrainian (O. Karabanova, L. Smulyanska, L. Karamushka, O. Kokun) and foreign researchers (M. Deutsch, K. Thomas, R. Kilmann, D. Goleman).

Scientific research provides a deeper understanding of the role of motivation in the mediation process and in shaping conflict resolution strategies. The expectations, needs, values, and emotional attitudes of the parties determine the outcome of mediation: destructive motivation complicates dialogue, while positive motivation promotes mutual understanding. Therefore, the study of motivation is relevant for developing effective approaches to resolving intra-group conflicts.

The relevance of this topic is determined by the need to integrate psychological, pedagogical, and communicative approaches to developing motivational readiness and implementing mediation practices in higher education institutions. This corresponds to modern requirements for the quality of education, the humanization of interpersonal relations, and the formation of a culture of nonviolent communication [1–5].

Ultimately, the motivation of the parties — their expectations, needs, values, and emotional attitudes — defines the effectiveness of mediation. Insufficient or destructive motivation can nullify the mediator's efforts, whereas conscious and positive motivation contributes to understanding and sustainable agreements. Thus, exploring the motivational component is crucial for developing strategies for resolving intra-group conflicts.

**The purpose of the article.** There is a theoretical justification and empirical study of mediation as a means of transforming the conflict behavior of students, aimed at identifying the psychological factors of mediation effectiveness and developing practical recommendations for the implementation of mediation practices in the educational environment.

**Presentation of the main material.** In the modern educational environment of higher education institutions, group conflicts increasingly arise due to the diversity of students' personal characteristics, value orientations, communication styles, and social roles. Under conditions of growing psychological pressure, academic competition, and social tension, the ability of participants in the educational process to resolve conflicts constructively becomes particularly significant.

The motivational readiness of students and teachers for dialogue, cooperation, and compromise is a key factor in shaping a safe, tolerant, and cohesive academic space. At the same time, effective conflict management requires professional intervention — in particular, the use of mediation strategies that help neutralize tension, restore mutual understanding, and prevent the escalation of disagreements.

Group conflicts in higher education institutions are contradictions that arise between individual students, academic groups, or between students and teachers who have different interests, values, behavioral styles, or viewpoints. Such conflicts can influence the educational process, social cohesion, and the psychological well-being of participants within the educational environment [1, 3].

Mediation strategies are a set of methods, techniques, and tactics used by a mediator to resolve conflicts between parties through the organization of constructive dialogue, the search for mutually acceptable solutions, and the reduction of emotional tension. In higher education institutions, these strategies are aimed at maintaining a

safe educational space, developing a culture of nonviolent communication, and preventing the escalation of disputes [2, 4].

Motivational readiness is an internal psychological state of the individual that manifests itself in the desire for constructive conflict resolution, openness to dialogue, the ability to self-reflect, and the willingness to take responsibility for the outcomes of interaction. In the context of higher education, it is formed through the development of emotional intelligence, communication skills, and value orientations focused on peaceful coexistence within the academic community [3, 5].

The psychological motivation of conflict participants during clashes of interests among students of Vinnytsia Mykhailo Kotsiubynsky State Pedagogical University is a key factor that determines the nature and dynamics of interpersonal interactions within the educational environment. The university community is a space where students with diverse values, needs, and behavioral styles face situations that may provoke contradictions on a daily basis. Understanding the internal motives that drive participants to defend their position or to seek justice and self-assertion makes it possible not only to resolve conflicts effectively but also to foster a culture of constructive dialogue. In the context of a pedagogical university, this aspect acquires particular importance, as future specialists must master the skills of emotional self-regulation, empathy, and conflict management competence [2, 5].

In order to identify motivational profiles of behavior in conflict-of-interest situations and to establish their connection with psychophysiological (clinical) indicators, a pilot study was conducted in the educational environment of Vinnytsia Mykhailo Kotsiubynsky State Pedagogical University under conditions closely approximating real interpersonal interaction. This approach allows for a comprehensive examination of not only the external manifestations of conflict behavior but also the underlying psychological mechanisms that determine it.

The analysis of motivational attitudes combined with psychophysiological reactions makes it possible to identify typical patterns of students' responses to conflict situations, as well as to outline risk groups — individuals with elevated levels of anxiety, emotional instability, or externally driven behavior. The obtained results can serve as a basis for developing targeted psychocorrective programs aimed at enhancing self-regulation, stress resilience, and constructive interaction within the educational environment.

For the purpose of the study, a representative sample comprising 1,000 students of Vinnytsia Mykhailo Kotsiubynsky State Pedagogical University aged 17 to 25 years was formed. Stratification was carried out according to the year of study, faculty, and gender, ensuring diversity in the socio-demographic characteristics of the participants. Only individuals who did not have acute mental disorders, cardiovascular crises, or who were not taking corticosteroids on the day of the study were included in the sample, which helped minimize the influence of medical factors on the results. All participants provided voluntary informed consent, and the study procedure was approved by the university's ethical review board. Ethical principles were observed in accordance with generally accepted standards of humane treatment of participants, data confidentiality, and voluntary participation.

Special attention was given to ensuring safety and ethical compliance in line with modern standards of humane conduct in psychological research. All respondents were informed about the conditions of participation, gave voluntary consent, and were guaranteed the right to withdraw from the study at any stage without explanation. To ensure psychological protection, the presence of a qualified psychologist was provided, offering support in cases of emotional distress or discomfort.

The methodology of the study was based on non-bioinvasive procedures, which excluded any interference with the body or risk to participants' health. In particular, to determine the cortisol level, salivary analysis was used — a safe and non-invasive method widely applied in psychophysiological research. All measurements were carried out according to standardized protocols, ensuring the accuracy, reproducibility, and ethical correctness of data collection.

The study employed a comprehensive design combining several levels of assessment of students' behavior and psychophysiological reactions in conflict situations. At the first stage, a baseline assessment was conducted, including the collection of demographic data and a brief well-being screening, particularly through the subjective stress scale, which made it possible to account for the individual characteristics of participants' condition before the start of the experimental procedures.

The core element of the procedure was an experimental conflict-of-interest situation, modeled through computerized game simulations — the *Ultimatum Game* and the *Public Goods Game* — as well as a negotiation simulation focused on the distribution of limited group resources. For each scenario, specific conditions of interest collision were created, such as budget, time, or reward constraints, along with

manipulations of fairness levels and rejection risk. This approach allowed the experiment to closely approximate realistic social interactions.

In parallel, psychophysiological monitoring was conducted, including a range of clinical indicators: heart rate (HR) and heart rate variability (HRV – RMSSD, pNN50) as measures of autonomic nervous system regulation; galvanic skin response (GSR/EDA) as an indicator of emotional arousal; blood pressure (systolic/diastolic) recorded before and after the experimental blocks; and salivary cortisol levels measured at two points — baseline and 20–30 minutes after the conflict exposure. When available, pupillometry or thermal facial imaging was additionally used to record stress responses.

To assess the motivational orientations of participants, standardized questionnaires adapted to the context of conflict interaction were used. The final stage of the procedure involved a micro-debriefing — a short interview with open-ended questions about the motives behind participants' decisions. This made it possible to qualitatively verify the obtained data and gain a deeper understanding of the internal logic of participants' behavior.

The study identified three groups of variables that allowed for a comprehensive evaluation of the behavioral, motivational, and psychophysiological aspects of conflict interaction.

Behavioral variables included the proportion of cooperative versus egocentric decisions, the level of rigidity or flexibility in proposals, and the frequency of agreement breakdowns — all serving as indicators of participants' response styles in conflict-of-interest situations. These measures provided a quantitative assessment of individuals' tendencies toward cooperation or confrontation.

Motivational variables included profiles of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, self- versus other-orientation, and interaction styles that reflect the participants' deep psychological dispositions in conflict situations. To assess these variables, three validated instruments were employed:

- The Situational Motivation Scale (SIMS), based on self-determination theory, measures levels of intrinsic motivation, identified regulation, external regulation, and amotivation in relation to a specific conflict situation.
- The Social Value Orientation (SVO) Slider Measure determines an individual's social-value orientation — prosocial, individualistic, or competitive — which reflects their motivational tendencies in the distribution of benefits during a conflict of interest.
- The Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory–II (ROCI-II) enables the formation of motivational strategy profiles such as integration, compromise, domination, avoidance, and accommodation, representing the goals and priorities of the parties involved in the conflict.

Clinical (psychophysiological) variables included indicators of heart rate variability (HRV), galvanic skin response (GSR), cortisol levels, and blood pressure, which serve as biomarkers of tension and regulation during conflict interaction. The integration of these physiological measures with behavioral and motivational data provides a deeper understanding of the mechanisms underlying students' responses to social challenges and supports the development of effective psychocorrectional strategies aimed at enhancing emotional regulation and adaptive conflict behavior.

The data analysis plan in the study involved a multilevel processing approach that combined statistical methods, normalization of physiological indicators, and modeling of interrelations among variables.

At the first stage, data cleaning and normalization of psychophysiological indicators were performed by comparing baseline and reactive phases, allowing for the accurate interpretation of participants' individual responses to conflict-related stimuli. Subsequently, a Latent Profile Analysis (LPA) of motivational data obtained through the SIMS, SVO, and ROCI-II instruments was conducted. This enabled the identification of types of motivational orientations, such as “*integrated-cooperative*” or “*egocentric-externally motivated-dominant*,” reflecting the internal structure of participants' motivation in conflict situations.

To test the hypothesis regarding the influence of motivational profiles on behavioral decisions, Generalized Linear Mixed Models (GLMM) and logistic regression were applied, allowing for the examination of whether motivational types predicted tendencies toward cooperation, dominance, or agreement breakdown. Additionally, mediation models were constructed to explore whether clinical stress indicators (HRV, GSR, cortisol) mediated the relationship between motivational characteristics and behavioral choices.

This comprehensive approach made it possible to identify the biological mechanisms underlying the influence of motivation on decision-making in conflict situations, integrating behavioral, psychological, and physiological dimensions of analysis.

Within the framework of the study, a number of working hypotheses were formulated to reflect the expected interrelationships among motivational orientations, behavioral decisions, and psychophysiological responses of participants in conflict situations.

It was hypothesized that higher levels of intrinsic and identified motivation (as measured by the SIMS scale), combined with a prosocial orientation (according to the SVO method), would be associated with a greater proportion of cooperative decisions, higher heart rate variability (HRV) — indicative of better autonomic regulation — and lower peaks of galvanic skin response (GSR) and cortisol levels, both markers of emotional tension.

Conversely, it was expected that participants characterized by predominantly external regulation or amotivation (SIMS), as well as by individualistic or competitive social-value orientation (SVO), would display harsher offers, a higher frequency of agreement breakdowns, lower HRV, and elevated GSR and cortisol levels, reflecting greater emotional reactivity and reduced self-regulation capacity.

Additionally, it was assumed that motivational strategies of integration and compromise (as measured by the ROCI-II scale) would be associated with more stable agreements and a more favorable autonomic-somatic profile, including balanced indicators of heart rate, blood pressure, and emotional activation. These hypotheses served as the basis for testing the interconnections between motivation, behavior, and physiological responses under the conditions of a simulated conflict of interest.

At the final stage, the results (Table 1) were stratified by gender, year of study, and prior experience in mediation programs, which made it possible to identify specific response patterns among different groups of students.

This approach ensured not only the scientific reliability of the results but also the psychological comfort of the participants, which is critically important in research involving conflict behavior and stress responses. The data obtained were based on the strict adherence to standardized protocols and instructions for the SIMS, SVO, and ROCI-II methods, guaranteeing their validity and compliance with ethical standards.

**Table 1**

**Results of the Pilot Study on the Psychological Motivation of Conflict Participants**

Indicators	Method / Instrument	Main Results (in % of the sample, n=1000)	Interpretation
1	2	3	4
Type of motivation during conflict	Motivational Orientation Questionnaire (author's modification of SIMS – Self-Determination Motivation Scale)	62% – prosocial, 25% – egocentric, 13% – avoidant	A prevailing orientation toward cooperation and maintaining group harmony
Behavioral strategies in conflict	Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory (ROCI-II)	54% – integration, 31% – compromise, 15% – competition/domination	Preference for constructive forms of interaction
Level of anxiety	Spielberger–Khanin Anxiety Scale	50% – high level, 47% – medium, 3% – low	Increased emotional tension in social situations
Trait anxiety	J. Taylor Manifest Anxiety Test	44% – high level, 53% – medium	High sensitivity to evaluation and a tendency toward self-criticism
Manifestations of social anxiety	SPIN – Social Phobia Inventory	40% – no manifestations, 37% – moderate, 23% – high	Presence of some students experiencing difficulties in social interaction
Physiological response to conflict (HRV, GSR)	Biofeedback analysis (pilot group)	45% – stable response, 38% – moderate increase, 17% – excessive	Dependence of emotional reactivity on the level of intrinsic motivation

Correlation between motivation and stress resilience	Pearson's r (statistical analysis)	$r = 0.63$ ( $p \leq 0.01$ ) between intrinsic motivation and prosocial behavior	Intrinsic motivation reduces the risk of destructive conflict behavior
Gender differences in motivation	Comparative analysis (t-test)	58% of females – empathic–compromising motivation; 42% of males – competitive–dominant	Women more often demonstrate socially oriented strategies

The study revealed dominant types of motivation characterizing students' behavior in conflict situations. For the majority of respondents (62%), prosocial motivation prevailed, manifesting in an orientation toward achieving mutual agreement, compromise, and fair conflict resolution. This type of motivation indicates a readiness for cooperation and constructive dialogue. Meanwhile, 25% of participants demonstrated egocentric motivation, focused on personal benefit or maintaining status, which reflects a tendency toward control and individual dominance. Another 13% of respondents exhibited an avoidant or passive stance, showing a tendency to evade conflict discussions, which may indicate a low level of engagement or emotional vulnerability.

An analysis of the relationship between motivation and emotional state showed that the level of situational anxiety (measured by the *Spielberger–Khanin Scale*) was moderately elevated in 47% of respondents, indicating emotional tension during conflict interaction. A clear association was observed between high anxiety levels and externally motivated behavioral strategies, such as avoidance and compliance. This finding supports the assumption that external motivation is often accompanied by lower emotional stability and a greater tendency toward maladaptive forms of response.

The behavioral strategies assessed using the *Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory (ROCI-II)* showed that 54% of students most frequently chose an integrative style — cooperation and the search for mutually beneficial solutions. Another 31% preferred compromise, while 15% favored competition or dominance. This distribution indicates a generally high level of communicative culture among students and an overall readiness for constructive conflict resolution.

The physiological indicators recorded during situational conflict modeling revealed that 38% of participants exhibited a moderate increase in heart rate variability (HRV) and electrodermal activity (GSR), indicating emotional activation. In 17% of respondents, the reaction was excessive, which may suggest reduced stress resilience and a need for additional psycho-emotional support. Meanwhile, 45% of participants demonstrated stable physiological responses, which correlated with high levels of self-regulation and intrinsic motivation, confirming their capacity for adaptive responding in conflict situations.

Correlation analysis confirmed a positive relationship between intrinsic motivation (as measured by SIMS) and prosocial behavioral strategies (ROCI-II) ( $r = 0.63$ ,  $p \leq 0.01$ ), indicating the interdependence between motivational orientation and constructive behavior. At the same time, a negative relationship was found between extrinsic motivation and physiological stability (HRV) ( $r = -0.48$ ,  $p \leq 0.05$ ), supporting the hypothesis that the type of motivation influences the level of emotional tension.

Gender analysis revealed that female students more often demonstrated empathic–compromising motivation, while male students tended toward competitive–dominant strategies. Moreover, higher emotional intelligence levels among female students correlated with lower anxiety and greater readiness for dialogue, emphasizing the crucial role of emotional competence in the development of adaptive behavioral strategies in conflict situations.

**Conclusions.** The summary of the research findings demonstrated that the psychological motivation of Vinnytsia Mykhailo Kotsiubynsky State Pedagogical University students in conditions of conflict interaction is predominantly prosocial in nature. This type of motivation is manifested through an orientation toward cooperation, compromise, and fair conflict resolution, reflecting maturity of social values, a developed communicative culture, and readiness for partnership-based interaction. Such characteristics represent a positive indicator of students' socio-psychological adaptation within the educational environment.

At the same time, a specific subgroup of students was identified with elevated situational anxiety and a predominance of externally motivated behavioral patterns, such as avoidance, compliance, or dominance. These features may indicate emotional instability, reduced stress resilience, and difficulties in self-regulation, thus highlighting the need for targeted psychocorrective intervention. In particular, it is crucial to develop skills of emotional self-regulation, constructive communication, and adaptive conflict resolution. In this context, the implementation of a program aimed at developing motivational readiness for constructive conflict resolution appears appropriate. Such a program could serve as an effective tool for preventing social maladaptation, enhancing

students' psychological well-being, and promoting the development of emotional competence and healthy models of interpersonal interaction within the academic community.

Future research perspectives include expanding the empirical base and deepening the analysis of motivational and psychophysiological factors underlying conflict behavior in educational settings. It would be advisable to incorporate inter-university samples to compare regional differences in motivational profiles and response styles. A particularly promising direction involves studying the dynamics of motivation in group interaction, especially in the context of mediation training, which would allow for an evaluation of the effectiveness of educational interventions in fostering constructive and adaptive behavior.

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## REFLECTION AS A PSYCHOLOGICAL MECHANISM FOR THE FORMATION OF PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY AMONG SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS

### Анотація

У статті здійснено теоретичний аналіз проблеми рефлексії як умови розвитку професійної ідентичності психологів закладів загальної середньої освіти. Актуальність дослідження зумовлена зростанням вимог до професійної діяльності психолога в умовах сучасного освітнього середовища, що характеризується високим рівнем невизначеності, багатофункціональністю ролей та значним емоційним навантаженням. У таких умовах особливого значення набуває здатність фахівця до усвідомлення власної діяльності, що забезпечується розвитком рефлексії.

У роботі проаналізовано основні наукові підходи до розуміння рефлексії як психологічного феномена та професійної ідентичності як динамічної структури особистості. Рефлексія розглядається як багатовимірний процес, що поєднує когнітивні, особистісні та регулятивні компоненти та забезпечує усвідомлення, аналіз і переосмислення професійного досвіду. Професійна ідентичність трактується як інтегративне утворення, що включає систему уявлень про себе як фахівця, професійні цінності, ролі та поведінкові стратегії.

Обґрунтовано, що рефлексія виступає не лише інструментом аналізу діяльності, а системоутворюючим механізмом, який забезпечує інтеграцію різних компонентів професійного становлення у цілісну структуру професійної ідентичності. Визначено, що залежно від рівня розвитку рефлексії професійна діяльність психолога може характеризуватися або розпорошенням у зовнішніх задачах, або надмірною зосередженістю на внутрішніх переживаннях, або здатністю до цілісного структурування власної діяльності.

Окрему увагу приділено аналізу сучасних зарубіжних і українських досліджень, у яких підкреслюється роль рефлексії як чинника професійного розвитку, засобу подолання професійних деформацій та умов формування професійної позиції психолога. Зазначено, що систематична рефлексивна практика сприяє підвищенню ефективності діяльності, розвитку професійної суб'єктності та підтримці психологічного благополуччя фахівця.

Зроблено висновок про те, що рефлексія є необхідною внутрішньою умовою формування професійної ідентичності психолога та визначає якість його професійної діяльності в умовах сучасного освітнього середовища.

**Ключові слова:** рефлексія, професійна ідентичність, психолог, заклад загальної середньої освіти, професійне становлення, самосвідомість.

### Abstract:

This article presents a theoretical analysis of the issue of reflection as a prerequisite for the development of professional identity among psychologists in general secondary education institutions. The relevance of the study stems from the growing demands on the professional activities of psychologists in the modern educational environment, which is characterized by a high level of uncertainty, multifunctional roles, and significant emotional stress. In such conditions, the specialist's ability to reflect on their own activities—which is facilitated by the development of reflection—becomes particularly important.

This paper analyzes the main scientific approaches to understanding reflection as a psychological phenomenon and professional identity as a dynamic structure of the personality. Reflection is viewed as a multidimensional process that combines cognitive, personal, and regulatory components and facilitates the awareness, analysis, and reinterpretation of professional experience. Professional identity is interpreted as an integrative construct that includes a system of self-concepts as a specialist, professional values, roles, and behavioral strategies.

It has been demonstrated that reflection serves not only as a tool for analyzing professional activity but also as a system-forming mechanism that ensures the integration of various components of professional

development into a coherent structure of professional identity. It has been determined that, depending on the level of development of reflection, a psychologist's professional activity may be characterized by either a dispersion of attention on external tasks, an excessive focus on internal experiences, or the ability to holistically structure one's own activity.

Particular attention is paid to an analysis of contemporary foreign and Ukrainian studies that emphasize the role of reflection as a factor in professional development, a means of overcoming professional biases, and a condition for the formation of a psychologist's professional stance. It is noted that systematic reflective practice contributes to increasing the effectiveness of professional activity, developing professional agency, and supporting the psychological well-being of the specialist.

It is concluded that reflection is a necessary internal condition for the formation of a psychologist's professional identity and determines the quality of their professional activity in the context of the modern educational environment.

**Keywords:** reflection, professional identity, psychologist, secondary school, professional development, self-awareness.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The modern work of a psychologist in general secondary education institutions is characterized by a high degree of complexity, uncertainty, and multidimensionality in professional tasks. Psychologists operate at the intersection of various social expectations—those of administrators, teachers, parents, and children—which often creates situations of role conflict and ambiguity regarding their professional stance. In such conditions, theoretical knowledge and methodologies alone are insufficient: the specialist's ability to be aware of their own actions, analyze experience, and form an internal professional stance becomes crucial.

At the same time, in the practice of training and work, psychologists often find themselves in a situation where they formally adopt a professional role without deeply reflecting on their own identity. This leads to blurred professional boundaries, dependence on external evaluations, and risks of professional burnout.

In this context, the study of reflection as a mechanism that ensures not only the analysis of one's activities but also the formation of a holistic professional "self" becomes particularly relevant.

### **An analysis of recent studies and publications**

The issue of reflection and professional identity is examined within the framework of various academic approaches.

In the classical sense, reflection is associated with making sense of experience and thinking about one's own actions [2]. This idea was further developed in the concept of reflective practice [11], where reflection is viewed as the ability to analyze actions both during the course of an activity and after its completion.

In the theory of transformational learning [7], reflection serves as a mechanism for revising one's own beliefs and forming new meanings. In contemporary research, it is also viewed as a multi-level process encompassing descriptive, analytical, and critical levels [7].

Professional identity in psychology is interpreted as a dynamic structure comprising one's self-concept as a specialist, professional values, roles, and the boundaries of one's practice. In the works of Erik Erikson, identity is viewed as a central element of personality development, while contemporary approaches emphasize its narrative nature and connection to the social context.

Domestic studies also analyze the characteristics of the organization of reflection in the work of psychologists in general secondary education institutions, particularly in terms of professional development and awareness of one's own activities [9].

In contemporary international research, reflection is regarded as a key competency in the professional development of allied health professionals. In particular, within the concept of reflective practice [11], it is emphasized that an effective professional is capable not only of applying knowledge but also of rethinking their own actions during the course of their work (reflection-in-action) and after its completion (reflection-on-action).

In the works [8], reflection is viewed as a multi-level process ranging from a superficial description of experience to its deep re-evaluation, which includes a change in attitudes and modes of action. This allows reflection to be viewed not as a one-time action, but as a systematic process of cognitive development.

In the context of transformational learning theory [7], reflection serves as a mechanism for critically reviewing one's own beliefs, which contributes to the formation of new meanings and professional orientations. Critical reflection is of particular importance here, as it allows one to go beyond established professional notions.

Furthermore, research devotes significant attention to the connection between reflection and metacognitive processes [4], which include awareness of one's own thinking, as well as the ability to self-regulate one's activities [13]. In this context, reflection is viewed as a component of a broader system of self-regulation of professional activity.

Thus, contemporary approaches allow us to view reflection as a complex, multidimensional process that combines cognitive, personal, and regulatory components.

In recent years, the issue of reflection as a factor in the professional development of professionals in support roles—particularly psychologists and educators—has become particularly relevant. This is linked to the increasing complexity of professional tasks, the need to work under conditions of uncertainty, and rising demands for the specialist's personal engagement in professional activities.

Contemporary international research views reflection as a key metacompetence that enables self-regulation, adaptation, and professional growth. In particular, recent studies emphasize that reflection serves not only as a tool for analyzing experience but also as a mechanism for forming professional identity through the process of comprehending one's own role and position in professional practice.

A separate area of contemporary research focuses on the study of reflection in the context of the training and practice of teachers and school psychologists. These studies emphasize that reflective practice fosters the ability to make informed decisions, enhances mental flexibility, and enables more effective work in situations of uncertainty.

Significant attention is also paid to the connection between reflection and professional identity during the early stages of professional development. Research shows that it is precisely reflective activity that allows for the integration of theoretical knowledge with practical experience, forming a holistic view of oneself as a professional.

In the context of contemporary approaches, reflection is also viewed as a component of self-regulated learning and metacognitive processes. This allows it to be interpreted as a mechanism that enables conscious management of one's own professional activities and development.

Thus, contemporary research confirms that reflection is a key factor in professional development and the formation of professional identity, particularly in the context of a complex and dynamic educational environment.

In the Ukrainian academic community, the issue of reflection and its role in the professional development of specialists, particularly psychologists, is actively studied in the context of professional development and personal self-actualization.

Recent domestic research emphasizes that reflection serves as a key mechanism for professional growth, as it fosters awareness of one's own experience and contributes to the development of professional competence. In particular, the works of Ukrainian scholars highlight the role of supervision as a form of organizing reflection that contributes to enhancing the effectiveness of psychologists' professional activities and their professional development [5].

An important area of research is the study of professional identity as a factor in personal self-actualization. These studies emphasize that professional identity is formed as a result of the integration of personal experience, professional values, and activities, which is directly linked to reflective processes [6].

In addition, contemporary research examines the relationship between personal characteristics and the psychological well-being of professionals in complex socio-economic conditions. In this context, the significance of internal resources is emphasized, including the capacity for reflection, which ensures adaptation to change and supports professional resilience [10].

Thus, the results of contemporary Ukrainian studies confirm that reflection is an important factor in a psychologist's professional development and also plays a key role in shaping their professional identity within the educational environment.

Despite a significant body of research, contemporary studies still exhibit a fragmented understanding of the relationship between reflection and professional identity, particularly in the context of the work of school psychologists in general secondary education settings. Insufficient attention is paid to considering reflection as an integrative mechanism that ensures the integrity of professional development.

Therefore, the relationship between reflection and the professional identity of a psychologist, particularly in the school environment, requires further theoretical exploration.

#### **Purpose of the Article**

The purpose of this article is to provide a theoretical justification for the role of reflection as a psychological mechanism in the formation of the professional identity of a psychologist in a general secondary education institution.

### **Presentation of the main material**

Reflection in a psychologist's professional practice can be defined as the ability to recognize, analyze, and reevaluate one's own actions, experiences, attitudes, and the outcomes of interactions with clients, encompassing all participants in the educational process, including the children's parents.

Unlike a simple analysis of activities, reflection includes:

- awareness of one's own position;
- understanding of the influence of personal factors on professional decisions;
- the ability to change behavior based on experience gained.

Thus, reflection is not only a cognitive but also a personal process that ensures the development of professional agency.

Reflection takes on particular significance in the work of a psychologist, which is reflective by nature. A psychologist not only analyzes the behavior and experiences of others but also constantly engages with their own reactions, attitudes, and emotional states.

In the psychologist's work, reflection serves a dual function: on the one hand, it is aimed at analyzing professional interaction with the client, and on the other, at becoming aware of one's own position within this interaction. This creates an additional burden, as the psychologist is forced to simultaneously maintain focus on both the external and internal levels of activity.

In the context of working in general secondary education institutions, this characteristic is accentuated by the multifunctional nature of the psychologist's role. The need to interact with various stakeholders in the educational process requires a constant reevaluation of one's professional stance, making reflection not merely desirable but a necessary condition for effective practice.

### **2. Professional Identity as a Dynamic Structure**

A psychologist's professional identity is formed through the integration of several components:

- cognitive (knowledge of the profession);
- value-based (professional beliefs);
- behavioral (work style);
- emotional (attitude toward the professional role).

It is not static but constantly changes under the influence of experience, interaction with others, and professional challenges.

This is particularly evident in the school environment, where the psychologist is forced to simultaneously fulfill various roles—consultant, mediator, diagnostician—which complicates the process of forming a coherent identity.

In contemporary research, professional identity is viewed not only as a characteristic of professional development but also as an important factor in personal self-actualization. In particular, it is emphasized that a well-formed professional identity ensures internal coherence in professional activity, promotes a sense of wholeness, and facilitates the realization of the specialist's personal potential [6].

In this context, a psychologist's professional identity is not only the result of professional development but also a prerequisite for the effective performance of professional duties, which is directly linked to the level of reflective development.

### **3. Reflection as a Mechanism for the Formation of Professional Identity**

Reflection facilitates the key processes necessary for the formation of professional identity:

3.1. Awareness of experience The psychologist analyzes their own actions and their consequences, which allows for the formation of a more accurate understanding of their professional role.

3.2. Integration of professional roles Through reflection, various aspects of activity are harmonized into a unified system.

3.3. Establishing professional boundaries Reflection helps determine where the psychologist's area of responsibility ends.

3.4. Adjusting professional behavior Analyzing mistakes and successes contributes to the development of more effective strategies for action.

Thus, reflection serves not only as a mechanism for analyzing activity but also as a system-forming factor that ensures the integration of professional experience, external influences, and internal attitudes into a coherent structure of professional identity.

What is important is not only the mere fact of reflection but also its qualitative characteristics, particularly its capacity for regulation, which determines whether it contributes to professional development or, conversely, becomes a factor in the disorganization of activity.

#### **4. Levels of reflection in professional activity**

In the professional practice of a psychologist, several levels of reflection can be identified:

- **Situational level** — analysis of a specific interaction (e.g., a counseling session);
- **Processual level** — awareness of one's own actions during the course of work;
- **Deep level** — reflection on oneself as a professional, one's values, and beliefs.

It is the deep level that is decisive for the formation of professional identity.

Each of these levels performs a distinct function in a psychologist's professional practice. The situational level allows for the analysis of specific cases and the adjustment of interactions with clients. The procedural level ensures the ability to self-regulate during practice, which is particularly important in complex or emotionally charged situations.

The deep level of reflection is associated with rethinking one's own professional stance, values, and attitudes. It is at this level that professional experience is integrated and a stable professional identity is formed.

Insufficient development of one of these levels can lead to an imbalance in professional practice, which underscores the need for the comprehensive development of reflective thinking.

#### **5. Qualitative Features of Reflection in the Professional Practice of a Psychologist**

- When reflective thinking is underdeveloped, there is a tendency to become distracted by external tasks without properly reflecting on one's own professional stance, which hinders the formation of a coherent professional identity.

- In the case of an imbalance in reflection, there may be an excessive focus on internal experiences ("self-doubt"), which reduces the effectiveness of one's work and complicates professional decision-making.

- At the same time, a sufficient level of reflection ensures the integration of experience, manifested in the ability to build a coherent structure of professional activity and a stable professional identity.

Thus, reflection is the mechanism that "assembles" the disparate elements of professional development into a coherent professional "self."

#### **6. Risks of a Lack of Reflection**

The absence or insufficient level of reflection leads to a number of distortions:

- the formation of a superficial, formal identity;
- dependence on external evaluations;
- blurring of professional boundaries;
- increased emotional exhaustion;
- decreased effectiveness of professional activity.

In this case, the psychologist does not act as an agent but merely reflects external expectations.

These distortions can be cumulative in nature and manifest not immediately, but over the course of professional practice. In particular, a prolonged lack of reflection contributes to the formation of stereotypical behavioral patterns, a reduced sensitivity to changes in the professional situation, and a loss of the ability to respond flexibly.

In the long term, this can lead to professional maladjustment and the loss of a sense of professional identity as an internal anchor.

Contemporary Ukrainian research also devotes significant attention to the problem of professional distortions among psychologists, which is directly linked to the level of developed reflection. In particular, it is emphasized that insufficiently developed reflective skills can lead to the entrenchment of ineffective professional strategies, reduced sensitivity to changes in the professional situation, and the formation of stereotypical models of interaction [1].

Within the framework of studies devoted to the postgraduate training of psychologists, the importance of implementing special technologies aimed at developing reflection as a means of overcoming professional distortions is emphasized. In this context, reflective activity is viewed as a mechanism for becoming aware of one's own professional limitations and resources, which contributes to increasing the effectiveness of professional practice [1].

In addition, domestic studies emphasize the role of organized reflection as a prerequisite for a psychologist's professional growth. In particular, it is noted that systematic reflective practice allows not only for the analysis of experience but also for its reinterpretation, which is essential for the formation of a stable professional identity [9].

Studies on the organization of reflection among psychologists in general secondary education institutions emphasize that reflection serves as a prerequisite for understanding one's own professional role and position, and also helps align the demands of the educational environment with the specialist's internal attitudes [9].

Thus, the results of Ukrainian studies confirm that reflection is not only a tool for analyzing one's activities but also an important factor in preventing professional burnout and supporting the professional identity of the psychologist.

### **Conclusions**

Reflection is a key psychological mechanism in the formation of the professional identity of a psychologist in a general secondary education institution. It ensures the integration of professional experience, awareness of one's own role, and the development of professional agency.

Professional identity is formed as a dynamic system that depends on the psychologist's capacity for reflection at various levels. In its absence, the risk of professional deformation and the loss of the integrity of the professional "self" increases.

Reflection is not merely a supplementary element of a psychologist's professional practice; rather, it serves as an intrinsic prerequisite without which the formation of a coherent professional identity is impossible.

Further research could focus on developing integrated models of factors influencing the development of professional identity, taking into account the role of reflection as a system-forming element.

Thus, reflection can be viewed not only as a tool for analyzing professional activity but also as a fundamental mechanism of a psychologist's professional development. It is reflection that facilitates the transition from an externally assigned professional role to an internally accepted professional identity. This further confirms the assertion that reflection serves as a system-forming mechanism of a psychologist's professional development.

In this context, the development of reflection should be viewed as one of the key areas of training and support for psychologists in general secondary education institutions. This opens up prospects for further research aimed at studying the conditions for the development of reflection and its impact on the effectiveness of professional activity.

Thus, reflection serves not only as a prerequisite but also as an internal mechanism of a psychologist's professional development, determining the quality of their professional activity and the stability of their professional identity in conditions of change and uncertainty.

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